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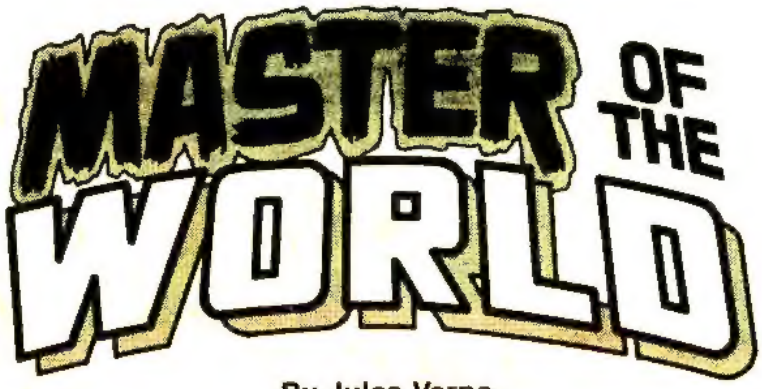
MASTER OF THE WORLD
ALL NEW MARVEL CLASSICS COMICS
MASTER OF THE WORLD
ADAPTED FROM THE CLASSIC NOVEL BY JULES VERNE
52 FULL PGS. NO ADS
SUSPENSE AND INTRIGUE IN THE MAGNIFICENT MANNER--AS ONLY MIGHTY MARVEL CAN PRESENT IT!
KANE
WACKER

STAN LEE presents



By Jules Verne

ARCHIE GOODWIN
Editor-in-Chief

JOHN WARNER
Editor

DOUG MOENCH
Script

DINO CASTRILLO
Artist

CONDOY
Lettering

PETRA GOLDBERG
Coloring

RALPH MACCHIO
LEN GROW
NORA MACLIN
JOHN ROMITA JR.
Production & Staff

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in Nantes, France in 1828, Jules Verne was the son of a lawyer. His father expected him to become a barrister, too, but Verne was addicted to sea travel and scientific study.

His interest in science led him to create rich science fiction. In fact, many of the creations of his fantasies described in his books were later actually invented. Submarines, for example, were used by Verne before their manufacture. And in the nineteenth century, Verne was talking about rockets around the moon, television, atomic bombs, polar travel, photography, automobiles, and travel to the center of the earth.

Many of his scientific discoveries are embodied in his books. Two of the best known are *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and *Around the World in Eighty Days*. He wrote also *The Castaways of the Flag, Five Weeks in a Balloon, Master of the World, From the Earth to the Moon,* and *Mysterious Island*.

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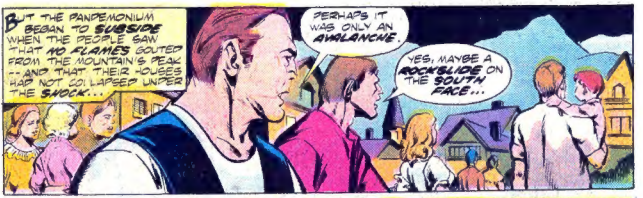
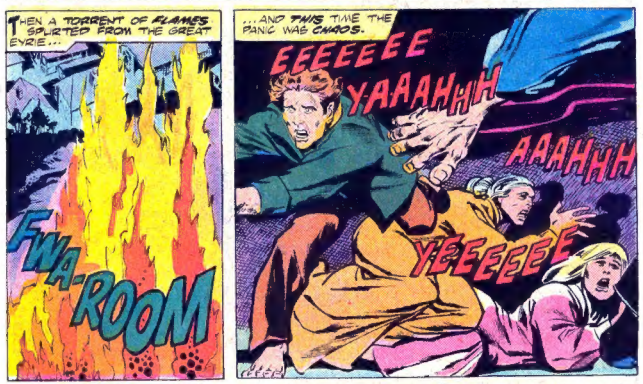
MASTER OF THE WORLD
by JULES VERNE
I AM JOHN STROCK. IF I SPEAK TOO MUCH OF MYSELF IN THIS STORY, IT IS BECAUSE I AM DEEPLY INVOLVED IN ITS STARTLING EVENTS -- THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS THIS CENTURY WILL WITNESS. AS HEAD INSPECTOR IN THE FEDERAL POLICE, I FOUND MYSELF IN CHARGE OF AN ASTONISHING INVESTIGATION OF IMPENETRABLE MYSTERIES...

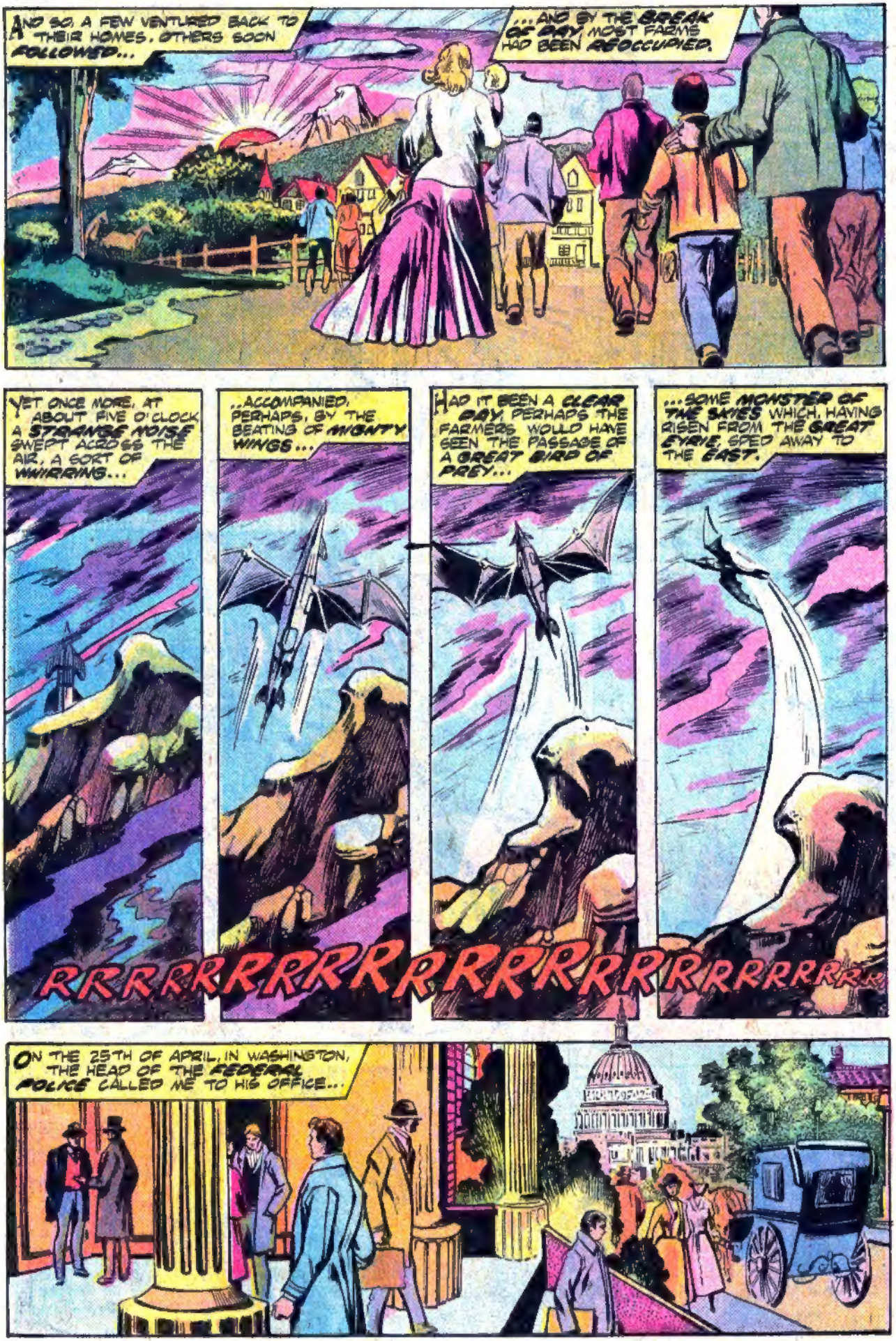
THE STRANGE OCCURRENCES WERE FIRST HINTED IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN SECTION OF NORTH CAROLINA, NEAR A CERTAIN PEAK CALLED THE GREAT BYRNS...
LOOK THERE-- SMOKE POURING FROM IT AGAIN.
YOU KNOW, WHEN I PASSED NEAR IT YESTERDAY, I THOUGHT I HEARD RUMBLINGS INSIDE. MAYBE IT'S A VOLCANO...
MOST IMMEDIATELY THREATENED WERE THE CITIZENS OF MORGANTON...
MUST BE A WAY A MAN COULD CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THAT INFERNAL MOUNTAIN-- AND SEE WHAT'S INSIDE.
MAYBE... BUT IT'S NEVER BEEN DONE BEFORE. CLIFFS ARE TOO STEEP.
ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 4TH, MORGANTON WAS AWAKENED BY A SUDDEN UPROAR...
BRUUUUM
PHILIP-- WAKE UP, PHILIP! THE MOUNTAIN-- IT'S FALLING ON US!!
CRASH
IN TERROR AND PANIC, THE PEOPLE OF MORGANTON RUSHED FROM THEIR HOMES, READY FOR FLIGHT. SCREAMS SPLIT THE NIGHT...
IT'S AN EARTHQUAKE!!
AND-- AN ERUPTION! THE VOLCANO HAS ERUPTED!!
HELP, MOMMY-- HELP!!

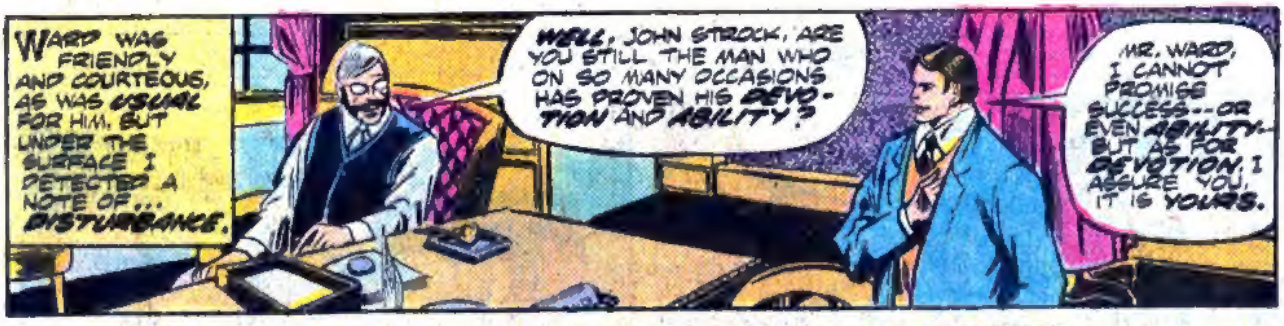

BUT THE PANDEMONIUM BEGAN TO SUBSIDE WHEN THE PEOPLE SAW THAT NO FLAMES GUSHED FROM THE MOUNTAIN'S PEAK --AND THAT THEIR HOUSES HAD NOT COLLAPSED UNDER THE SHOCK...
PERHAPS IT WAS ONLY AN AVALANCHE.
YES, MAYBE A ROCKSLIDE ON THE SOUTH FACE...

AN HOUR PASSED WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENT...


THEN A TORRENT OF FLAMES SPURTED FROM THE GREAT EYRIE...
FWA-ROOM
...AND THIS TIME THE PANIC WAS CHAOS.
EEEEEEE
YAAAHHHH
AAAHHH
YEEEEEE

NEVERTHELESS, SOME OF THE SHREWDER MEN WERE NOT AFFECTED BY THE MAD FLIGHT...
IT CAN'T BE A VOLCANIC ERUPTION-- THE FLAMES ARE DIMINISHING AND THERE'S NO LAVA...
YES, AND NO CHUNKS OF ROCK BURSTING OUT...


AND SO, A FEW VENTURED BACK TO THEIR HOMES. OTHERS SOON FOLLOWED...
...AND BY THE BREAK OF DAY, MOST FARMS HAD BEEN REOCCUPIED.
YET ONCE MORE, AT ABOUT FIVE O'CLOCK A STRANGE NOISE SWEPT ACROSS THE AIR, A SORT OF WHIRRING...
...ACCOMPANIED, PERHAPS, BY THE BEATING OF MIGHTY WINGS...
HAD IT BEEN A CLEAR DAY, PERHAPS THE FARMERS WOULD HAVE SEEN THE PASSAGE OF A GREAT BIRD OF PREY...
...SOME MONSTER OF THE SKIES WHICH, HAVING RISEN FROM THE GREAT EYRIE, SPED AWAY TO THE EAST.
RRRR


WARD WAS FRIENDLY AND COURTEOUS, AS WAS USUAL FOR HIM. BUT UNDER THE SURFACE I DETECTED A NOTE OF... DISTURBANCE.
WELL, JOHN STROCK, ARE YOU STILL THE MAN WHO ON SO MANY OCCASIONS HAS PROVEN HIS DEVOTION AND ABILITY?
MR. WARD, I CANNOT PROMISE SUCCESS--OR EVEN ABILITY. BUT AS FOR DEVOTION, I ASSURE YOU, IT IS YOURS.

GOOD. AND ARE YOU STILL AS FOND OF RIDDLES AS EVER--JUST AS EAGER TO PENETRATE MYSTERIES?
I AM.
PERHAPS MORE SO.

EVEN BETTER. DOUBTLESS YOU'VE HEARD WHAT HAS HAPPENED DOWN IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS NEAR MORGANTON.
IT IS OUR DUTY TO DETERMINE IF THESE PHENOMENA NEAR THE GREAT EYRIE POSE ANY DANGER TO THE PEOPLE OF THE AREA.

YES, MR. WARD? MEANING...?
MEANING WE MUST KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE THAT MOUNTAIN. THIS, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY PRESENTS GREAT DIFFICULTIES.
EVERYONE CLAIMS THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SCALE THE PRECIPICES OF THE GREAT EYRIE.

NOTHING, MR. WARD, IS IMPOSSIBLE.

THEN ORGANIZE AN EXPEDITION PARTY, STROCK. NOW.

YOU'LL BE CLEARED WITH THE MAYOR OF MORGANTON. HE WILL ASSIST YOU WITH EVERY NECESSARY COOPERATION.
AND SO WAS IT ARRANGED.

I ARRIVED IN MORGANTON TO BE GREETED BY THE MAYOR--ELIAS SMITH--AND TWO OTHER MEN.
WELCOME, JOHN STROCK. WE ARE YOUR THREE GUIDES.
THREE GUIDES--? DO YOU MEAN, MR. MAYOR, THAT YOU WILL BE JOINING US?
OF COURSE. I WOULDN'T MISS EXCITEMENT LIKE THIS FOR THE WORLD!
THREE DAYS LATER, AT DAWN, WE SET OUT TO CONQUER THE MOUNTAIN...
ARE THERE ANY PRECIPICES THAT CAN BE SCALED--OR CLEFTS AND BREAKS IN THE RIDGE?
I DON'T KNOW. QUITE FRANKLY, NO ONE HAS EVER CLIMBED THE GREAT EYRIE BEFORE.
IT IS SAID, HOWEVER, TO BE SURROUNDED BY WALLS OF INACCESSIBLE CLIFFS.
WE BEGAN OUR MOUNT BY A NARROW AND NOT SEVERELY STEEP GORGE...
WE REACHED THE UPPER BORDER BY NOON. BEFORE US LOOMED THE ROCKY WALL WHICH COMPRISED THE FINAL CREST OF THE GREAT EYRIE...
ON THIS SIDE, AT LEAST, IT IS COMPLETELY INSURMOUNTABLE...
YES... I SUPPOSE I CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT, MR. MAYOR...
COME ON--LET'S SEE IF IT'S POSSIBLE TO MAKE OUR WAY AROUND TO THE OTHER SIDE.
AND WITH A GREAT DIFFICULTY WE BEGAN OUR TORTUOUS CIRCUIT...

BUT NOWHERE WAS THERE ANY WAY IN WHICH ONE WILL CLAMBER HIGHER...
A THOUSAND DEVILS, WE KNOW NO MORE THAN BEFORE ABOUT WHAT'S INSIDE THIS CONFOUNDED MOUNTAIN!
WELL, AT LEAST WE KNOW THERE ARE NO VICIOUS MONSTERS NOW--AND NO SMOKE OR FLAME.
HURLING ONE LAST ANGRY GLARE AT THE ENIGMATIC PEAK, I FOLLOWED MY DISCONSOLATE COMPANIONS BACK TO THE GONDOLA...
BEFORE FIVE, WE DESCENDED THE LAST SLOPES OF THE MOUNTAIN RIDGE, WHERE A FARMER WELCOMED US...
...AND WE SAT DOWN TO A MUCH NEEDED MEAL.
YOU DIDN'T GET INSIDE THE GREAT EYRIE, EH?
THEN NO--I'M CONVINCED THE INSIDE EXISTS ONLY IN THE IMAGINATION OF OUR LESS ENLIGHTENED COUNTRY NEIGHBORS.
I HARBORED OTHER SUSPICIONS... ALTHOUGH I COULD NOT IDENTIFY THEM.
A FORTNIGHT AFTER MY RETURN TO WINSTOW, PUBLIC OPINION WAS DISTRACTED FROM THE MYSTERY OF THE GREAT EYRIE BY ANOTHER MYSTERY...
THE PAPER SAYS AN OCTOGORNADO, HAS BEEN SEEN ON THE ROADS NEAR PHILADELPHIA -- BUT THAT ONE CAN BELIEVE IT, SINCE IT PASSES ITS BRAND-LY THAT IT IS A MERE BLUR.
The Washington Post

SUPPOSEDLY, IT PARTS FORWARD LIKE A VERY BULLET--LEAVING BEHIND NO SMOKE OR STEAM, AND NO ODOR OF GASOLINE.
THEN IT MUST RUN ON ELECTRICITY--OR MAGIC!
INDEED, THE PUBLIC IMAGINATION READILY ACCEPTED EVERY MANNER OF OUTRAGEOUS RUMOR CONCERNING THIS MYSTERIOUS AUTOMOBILE...
A GOBLIN FROM ANOTHER WORLD.
NO--IT'S DRIVEN BY THE DEVIL HIMSELF!
SOON, POLICE REPORTED ITS APPEARANCE IN OTHER STATES...
GOOD STORY ABOUT THE DEMON AUTO IN THIS EDITION, SIR.
THEN THE FOLLOWING OCCURRENCE WAS REPORTED IN THE NEWSPAPERS...
Washington No
DEMON AUTO FINISHES RAC
THE DAY BEFORE, A RACE HAD BEEN SPONSORED BY THE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF WISCONSIN...
WISCONSIN AUTO RAC
THE ROUTE FORMS AN EXCELLENT TRACK--TWO-HUNDRED MILES IN LENGTH.
YES--THE FINISH LINE IS ON THE BORDER OF LAKE MICHIGAN.
AS THE RACE NEARED ITS EIGHT O'CLOCK START, THE EXCITEMENT MOUNTED IN INTENSITY...
TWO TO ONE ON THE FORD.
EVEN MONEY ON THE RENAULT!
FORD
ILE

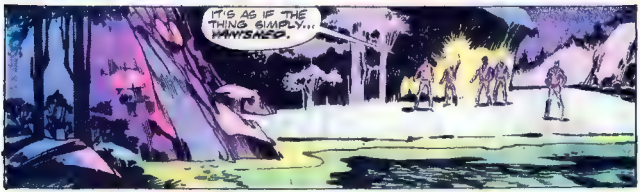
THE STARTING OFF CALL APPRECIATED THE TENSELY WAITING CONTESTANTS...
ON YOUR MARKS,
GET SET,
START
AND...
SUDDENLY, FROM SEVERAL MILES DISTANT, THERE WAS HEARD A TREMENDOUS NOISE
RRRRRR
...AN AWESOME RUMBLING WHICH EMANATED FROM THE HEART OF A SPEWING CLOUD OF DUST.
RRRRRRRRR
WHAT THE....?
A ROARING APPARITION PASSED--
RRRRRRRRAOWWWW
IT'S THAT INFERNAL MACHINE!
--AND DISAPPEARED--
IT IS THE DEVIL'S CAR--WITH SATAN HIMSELF DRIVING!!
RRRR
- IN THE SPACE OF A SINGLE INSTANT.

AFTER THE FIRST STUNNED MOMENTS OF FEAR AND SURPRISE HAD PASSED, MANY PEOPLE RUSHED TO TELEPHONES IN THE HOPES OF WARNING THOSE FURTHER ALONG THE ROUTE...
BUT I TELL YOU IT'S TRUE--HEADING YOUR WAY RIGHT NOW! YES, I KNOW IT'S IMPOSSIBLE--BUT IT WILL BE THERE IN LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES!
THE NEWS, WHEN BELIEVED, CAUSED GREAT ALARM...
WE'D BETTER ERECT A BARRICADE BEFORE IT GETS HERE!
WHY SHOULD WE? THE RO...TE ENDS ON THE SHORES OF LAKE MICHIGAN--IF THE VEHICLE EXISTS, IT'LL HAVE TO STOP THERE.
BUT THEN, A RUMBLING OF METAL BEHEMOTHS WAS HEARD...
RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR
T...IT'S... TRUE.
FAR DOWN THE RACE COURSE, DUST BILLOWED N VIOLENT WHIRLWINDS...
HARSH WHISTLINGS SHRIEKED, WARNING ALL TO CLEAR PASSAGE FOR THE STREAMLINED MONSTER...
RRREEEE

LIKE A COMETING STAR, FLASHED THROUGH MILWAUKEE...
RRRRAOWWW!
IT'S NOT SLOWING DOWN... I'LL PLUNGE RIGHT INTO LAKE MICHIGAN!!
COME ON--IT TURNED THIS WAY... THE LAKE IS JUST BEYOND!

BUT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GRAND...

...NO TRACE WAS FOUND OF THE VEHICLE'S PASSAGE...
THE TIRE TRACKS DISAPPEAR!


IT'S AS IF THE THING SIMPLY... VANISHED.

THE STORY OFFERED FEW CLUES AND NO SOLUTIONS...

I SET OFF FOR THE BUREAU OF FEDERAL POLICE AT ONCE--

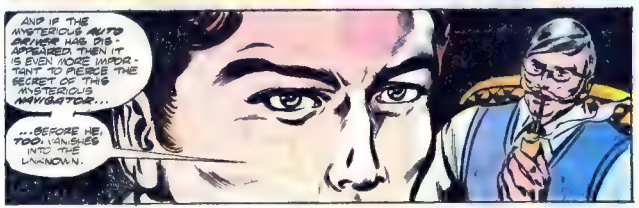
--WHERE, DESPITE MY LACK OF SUCCESS AT THE GREAT EYRIE, CHIEF WARD RECEIVED ME WARMLY...
CERTAIN THAT MOUNTAIN HOLDS THE KEY TO THIS MYSTERY! IF ONLY I HAD SUCCEEDED...
DON'T UPSET YOURSELF, STROCK. EVERYONE FAILS SOMETIMES -- EVEN IN THE POLICE FORCE.

STILL, I'M SURPRISED THAT NONE OF THE AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SHED MORE LIGHT ON THE RECENT PERFORMANCES OF THE DEMON AUTOMOBILE.
YOU SAY THERE HAS BEEN NO FURTHER NEWS SINCE THE WISCONSIN RACE."
NO, NOTHING.
THE ENTIRE MATTER IS DOCUMENTED IN THE NEWSPAPERS--WE HAVE NO MORE THAN THEY, QUITE EXTRAORDINARY...
...AND HERE IS SOMETHING NO LESS SO.
HE HANDED ME A REPORT.
1 SEATED MYSELF BY THE WINDOW AND STUDIED IT WITH EXTREME INTEREST...
HMM... IT'S FROM THE BOSTON OFFICE...
To: Chief Weed, Washington
From: Lancaster, Boston Office
A moving body has been appearing in the waters along the coasts of Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts... It moves with such lightning speed that the most powerful telescopes can scarcely follow it...
"IT MOVES WITH SUCH LIGHTNING SPEED THAT THE MOST POWERFUL TELESCOPES CAN SCARCELY FOLLOW IT..."
IT'S ABOUT THIRTY FEET LONG... AND SEEMS TO BE SHAPED LIKE A CIGAR.
"WILDLY DIFFERING OPINIONS ARE HELD AS TO THE NATURE OF THE OBJECT...
BAH! 'TIS NOTHING MORE THAN A WHALE.
WHAT WHALE NEVER SPOUTS--AS ALL WHALES MUST?

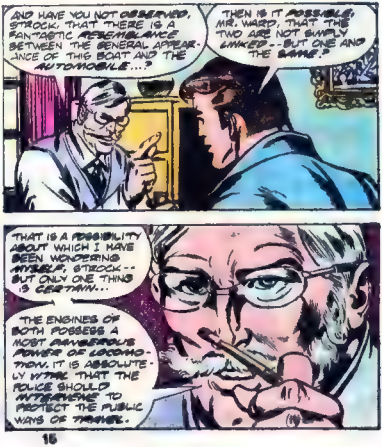
"WHENEVER IT APPEARS, SMALL SHIPS FLEE TO THE NEAREST HARBOR, FEARING CONFRONTATION AND BLURTING TALES OF LEVIATHAN..
QUICKLY--I MAY BE RAVENOUS!
AYE--IF IT WANTS TO ATTACK LET'S AT LEAST GIVE IT CAUSE FOR A DESPERATE CHASE!
"ON TUESDAY, A FLEET UNITED STATES GUNBOAT WENT OUT TO PURSUE THE MONSTER...
THERE IT IS..
SEND A FEW CANNON SHOT AFTER IT!
WE... WE CAN'T SIR..
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T?! I GAVE YOU AN ORDER, GUNNER--SEND SOME SHOT AT THE THING!!
BUT IT... IT'S ALREADY DISAPPEARED, SIR...
DISAPPEARED, HAS IT, YOU STUPID BLIND--
OR ALL THE--THE BLASTED THING IS NOT OF THIS WORLD!

"AS A RESULT OF CONFUSION AND CONFLICTING REPORTS, A GENERAL CHANGE OF DATA ON NOW PREVAILS."
INSTEAD OF A FISH OR SEA MONSTER I SAW IT MUST BE SOME NEW AND REMARKABLE TYPE OF BOAT.
IF SO, ITS ENGINE MUST HAVE INCREDIBLE POWER!! - FAR BEYOND ANYTHING MAN CAN DEVISE.
"THUS, IN CONCLUSION, THE REPORT CAN OFFER NO CONCLUSIONS."

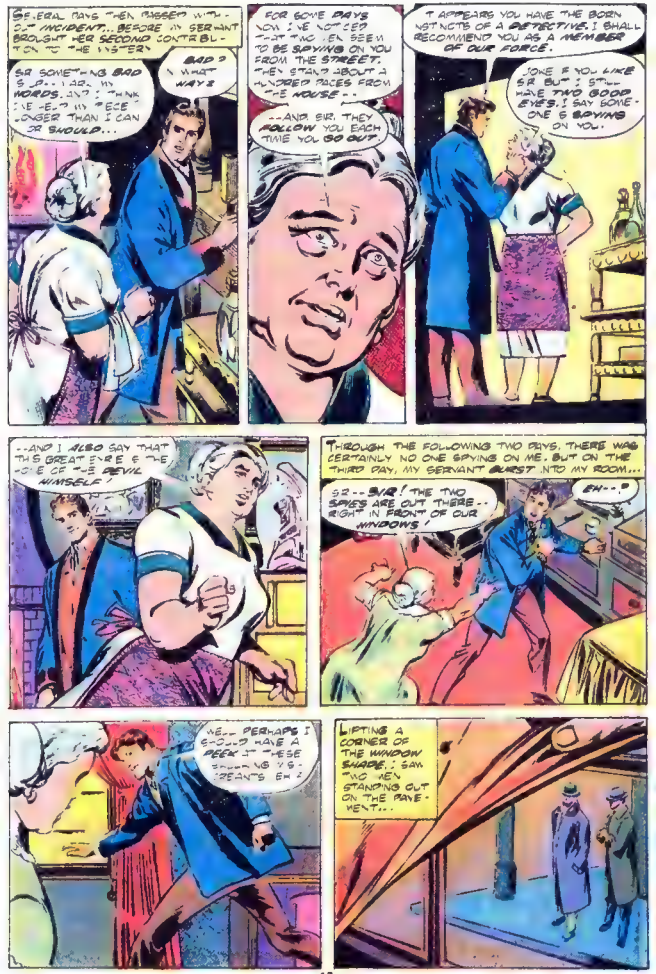
I FINISHED READING...
THE MOTOR OF THIS SO-CALLED BOAT MUST BE JUST AS POWERFUL - AND JUST AS UNKNOWN! - AS THAT OF THE REMARKABLE AUTOMOBILE...
WHICH ASPECT ARE YOU PUZZLING OVER, STROCK?


AND IF THE MYSTERIOUS AUTO DRIVER HAS DISAPPEARED, THEN IT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO PIERCE THE SECRET OF THIS MYSTERIOUS NEWCOMER...
...BEFORE HE, TOO, VANISHES INTO THE UNKNOWN.

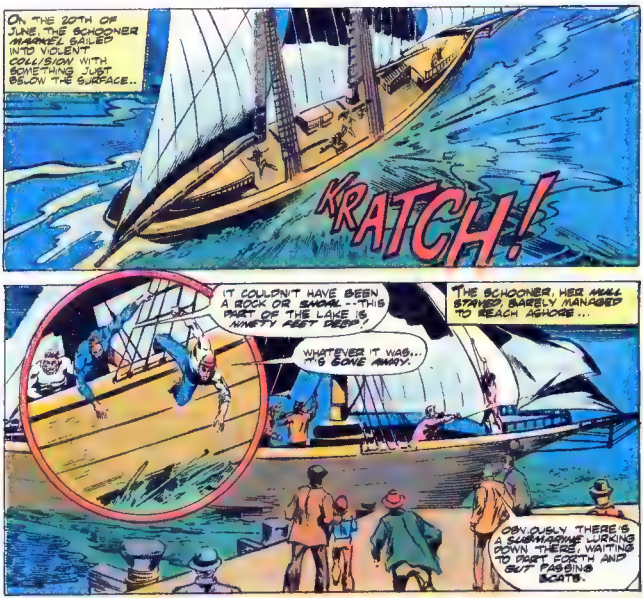
IT IS A SINGULAR COINCIDENCE, IS IT NOT, THAT AFTER THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE AUTOMOBILE, THIS BOAT SHOULD IMMEDIATELY COME INTO VIEW? SURELY THE TWO MUST BE SOMEHOW LINKED--?
YES...THAT WOULD BE THE OBVIOUS CONCLUSION.

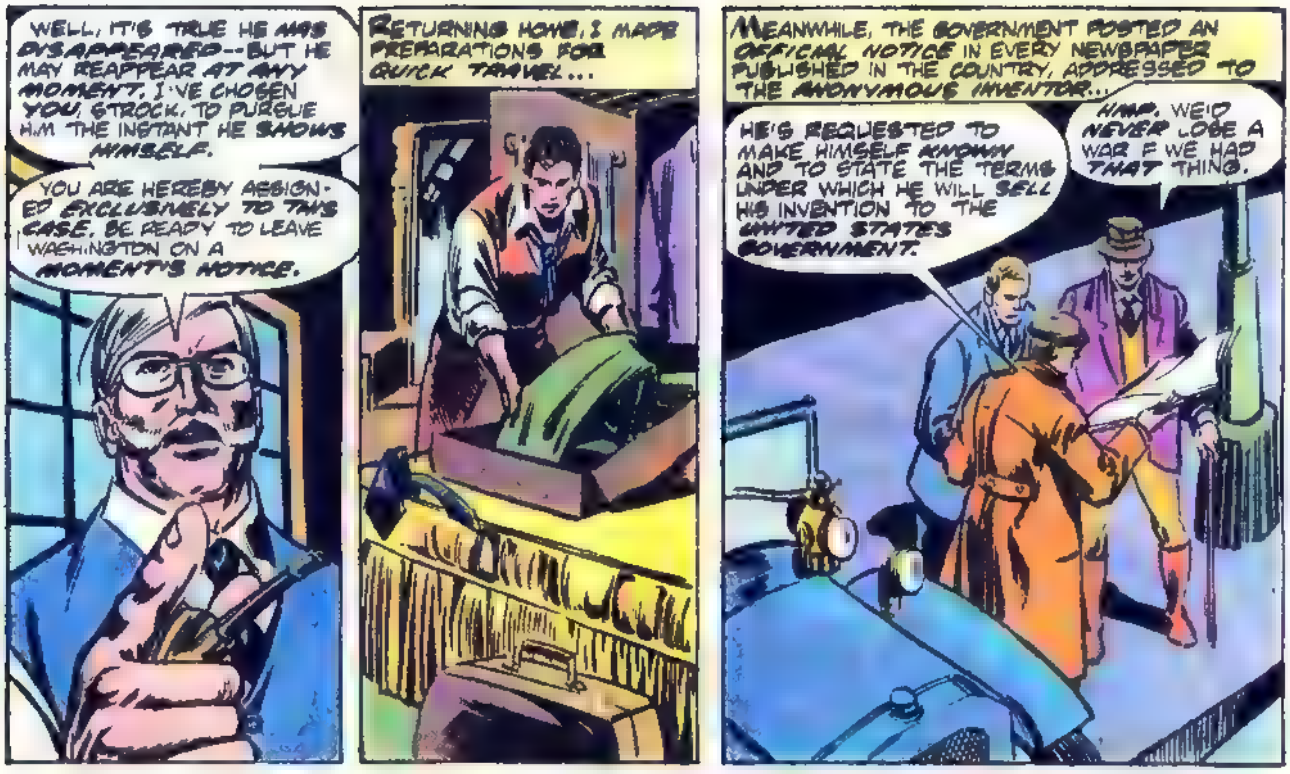

AND HAVE YOU NOT OBSERVED, STROCK, THAT THERE IS A FANTASTIC RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE GENERAL APPEARANCE OF THIS BOAT AND THE AUTOMOBILE...?
THEN IS IT POSSIBLE, MR. WARD, THAT THE TWO ARE NOT SIMPLY LINKED - BUT ONE AND THE SAME?
THAT IS A POSSIBILITY ABOUT WHICH I HAVE BEEN WONDERING MYSELF, STROCK - BUT ONLY ONE THING IS CERTAIN...
THE ENGINES OF BOTH POSSESS A MOST DANGEROUS POWER OF LOCOMOTION. IT IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL THAT THE POLICE SHOULD INTERVENE TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC WAYS OF TRAFFIC.

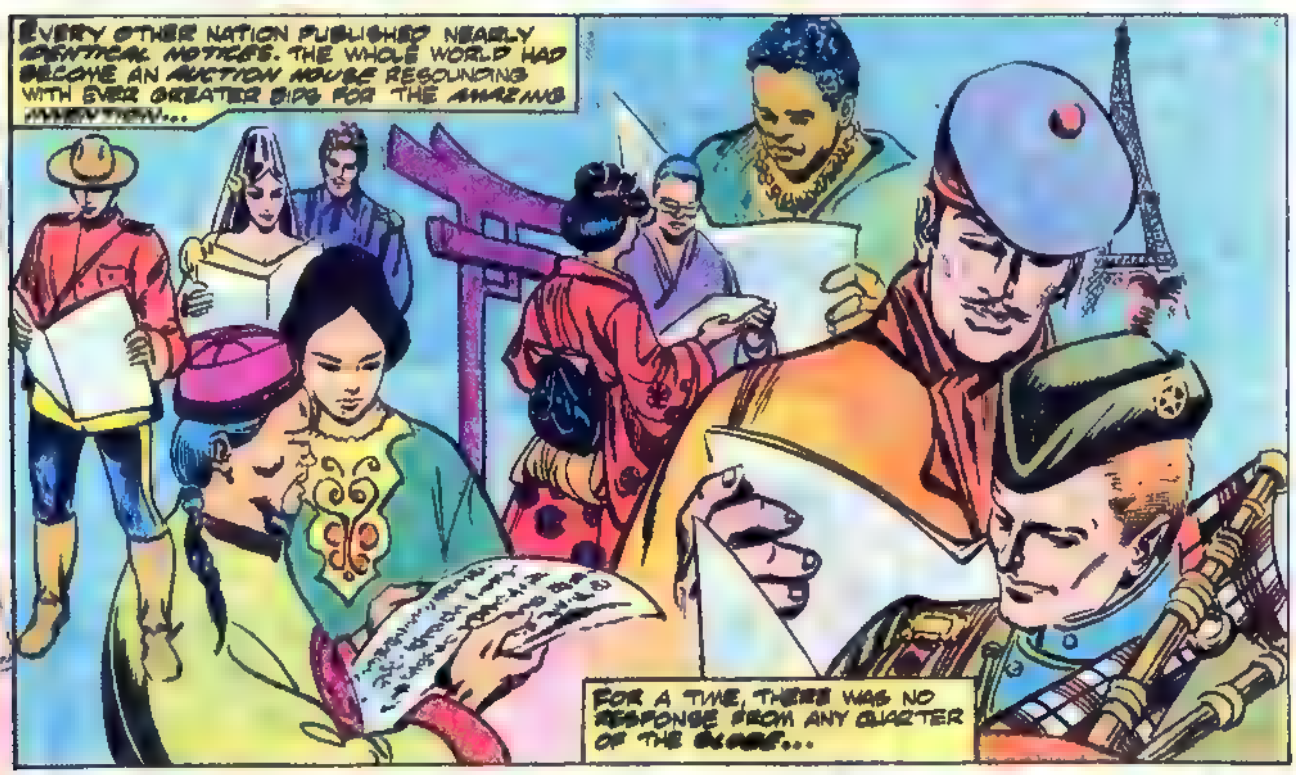
AFTER MY MEETING WITH MR. WARD, I RETIRED TO MY HOME WHERE I HAD AMPLE TIME TO PONDER THE STRANGE CASE...
THE MAIL, MR. STROCK.
THE FOLLOWING MORNING, MY ELDERLY SERVANT BROUGHT ME ANOTHER PIECE TO ADD TO THE PUZZLE...
IT IS POSTMARKED FROM MORGANTON -- NO DOUBT SOME NEWS FROM THE MAYOR..
I OPENED THE LETTER. THE HANDWRITING WAS BOLD -- AND IT WAS NOT FROM THE MAYOR...
Sir,
you were charged with the mission of penetrating the great eyrie. you sought an entrance and found none. do not try again. a second attempt will have grave consequences for you. need this warning; or suffer evil fortune.
M.O.W.
I CONFESS THAT AT FIRST THE LETTER DUMBFOUNDED ME, AND EVEN FILLED ME WITH SOME MEASURE OF FEAR...
OH, SIR! IS IT BAD NEWS--?
I...I DON'T KNOW...
THEN, DECIDING THE LETTER MUST HAVE COME FROM A PRACTICAL JOKER OR A MADMAN I RESOLVED NOT TO WORRY ABOUT IT...
NOTHING BUT A POOR JEST, NO DOUBT.
IF YOU SAY SO, SIR--BUT THESE DAYS, ONE NEVER KNOWS...

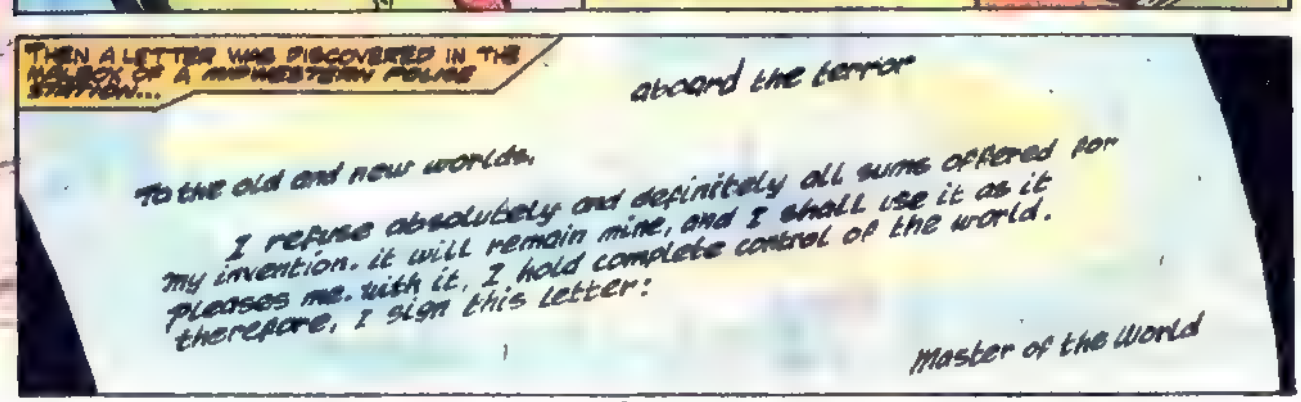

SEVERAL DAYS THEN PASSED WITHOUT INCIDENT... BESIDE MY SERVANT BROUGHT HER SECOND CONTRIBUTION TO THE MYSTERY
BAD? WHAT WAY?
SIR SOMETHING BAD I SUPPOSE... MY WORDS... DON'T THINK I'VE SEEN MY FACE LONGER THAN I CAN OR SHOULD...
FOR SOME DAYS NOW, I'VE NOTICED THAT TWO MEN SEEM TO BE SPYING ON YOU FROM THE STREET. THEY STAND ABOUT A HUNDRED PACES FROM THE HOUSE...
...AND SIR, THEY FOLLOW YOU EACH TIME YOU GO OUT
IT APPEARS YOU HAVE THE BORN INSTINCTS OF A DETECTIVE. I SHALL RECOMMEND YOU AS A MEMBER OF OUR FORCE.
JOKE IF YOU LIKE SIR BUT STILL I HAVE TWO GOOD EYES. I SAY SOMEONE IS SPYING ON YOU.
...AND I ALSO SAY THAT THIS GREAT ERE IS THE LOSE OF THE DEVIL HIMSELF!
THROUGH THE FOLLOWING TWO DAYS, THERE WAS CERTAINLY NO ONE SPYING ON ME. BUT ON THE THIRD DAY, MY SERVANT BURST INTO MY ROOM...
SIR--SIR! THE TWO SPIES ARE OUT THERE-- RIGHT IN FRONT OF OUR WINDOWS!
EH--?
WELL PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE A PEEK AT THESE SPYING FIENDS EH?
LIFTING A CORNER OF THE WINDOW SHADE, I SAW TWO MEN STANDING OUT ON THE PAVEMENT...

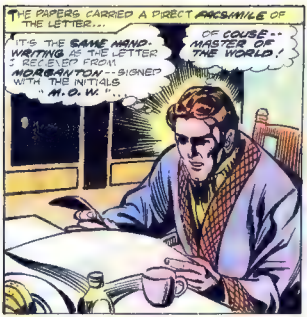
WELL, THERE ARE INDEED TWO MEN OUT THERE--BUT TWO MEN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE SAME AS TWO SPIES.
ARE YOU CERTAIN THOSE ARE THE SAME MEN YOU SAW BEFORE?
YES, SIR--ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN.
VERY WELL, THEN. IF THEY FOLLOW ME WHEN I GO TO THE POLICE STATION, I'M SURE I'LL BE ABLE TO OFFER THEM SOME HOSPITALITY THERE.
BE CAREFUL, SIR--MAKE SURE YOU REACH THE STATION.
BUT WHEN I STEPPED INTO THE STREET, THE TWO MEN WERE NO LONGER THERE...
...AT LEAST, NOT IN SIGHT.
FROM THAT TIME ON, NEITHER MY SERVANT NOR I EVER SAW THEM AGAIN, AND I CAME TO REGARD THE MATTER AS UNIMPORTANT.
THEN, ON A LAKE IN ADAMS.S.R. THERE CAME A NEW EVENT OF MYSTERY...
IT MUST BE A SEA SERPENT--THRASHING JUST BELOW THE SURFACE!
BUT HOW COULD A SEA SERPENT GET INTO THE LAKE, IT IS NOT CONNECTED TO ANY OTHER BODY OF WATER!
THEN MAYBE SOMEONE'S EXPERIMENTING WITH A SUBMARINE...
HOW COULD ANYONE GET A HEAVY SUBMARINE INTO THIS LAKE--IT'S COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY A CIRCLE OF MOUNTAINS...!

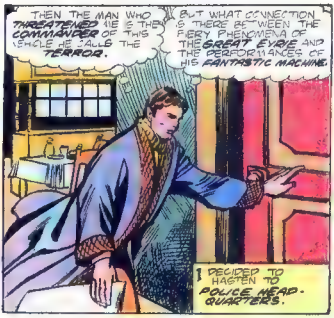

ON THE 20TH OF JUNE THE SCHOONER MARMEL SAILED INTO VIOLENT COLLISION WITH SOMETHING JUST BELOW THE SURFACE..
KRATCH!
IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN A ROCK OR SHOAL--THIS PART OF THE LAKE IS NINETY FEET DEEP!
WHATEVER IT WAS.. IT'S GONE AWAY.
THE SCHOONER, HER HULL STAVED, BARELY MANAGED TO REACH ASHORE...
OBVIOUSLY THERE'S A SUBMARINE LURKING DOWNTHERE, WAITING TO DART FORTH AND BUT PASSING BOATS.
THE NEWSPAPER HAD A FIELD DAY WITH THE OCCURRENCE...
"AFTER THE MYSTERIOUS AUTOMOBILE CAME THE MYSTERIOUS BOAT, NOW COMES THE MYSTERIOUS SUBMARINE. MUST WE CONCLUDE THAT THE THREE ENGINES ARE THE GENIUS OF THE SAME INVENTOR--"
"--AND THAT THE THREE VEHICLES ARE IN TRUTH BUT ONE?"
WELL, THAT EDITORIAL WRITER MAY PROVE TO BE MORE PROPHETIC THAN HE IMAGINES...
I'D BETTER GET OVER TO WARD'S OFFICE.
WARD HAD FURTHER NEWS: THE LAKE HAD BEEN SEARCHED END TO END--IN VAIN. WHATEVER HAD BEEN DOWN THERE WAS NOW GONE...
STROCK, WOULD YOU LIKE TO DISCOVER THE INVENTOR OF THIS THREEFOLD MACHINE?
I MOST CERTAINLY WOULD, MR. WARD--IF ONLY TO SHAKE HIS HAND FOR THOROUGHLY BAFFLING ME.

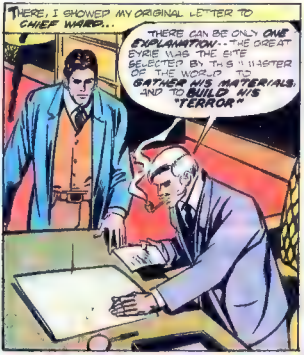

WELL, IT'S TRUE HE HAS DISAPPEARED--BUT HE MAY REAPPEAR AT ANY MOMENT. I'VE CHOSEN YOU, STROCK, TO PURSUE HIM THE INSTANT HE SHOWS HIMSELF.
YOU ARE HEREBY ASSIGNED EXCLUSIVELY TO THIS CASE. BE READY TO LEAVE WASHINGTON ON A MOMENT'S NOTICE.
RETURNING HOME, I MADE PREPARATIONS FOR QUICK TRAVEL...
MEANWHILE, THE GOVERNMENT POSTED AN OFFICIAL NOTICE IN EVERY NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED IN THE COUNTRY, ADDRESSED TO THE ANONYMOUS INVENTOR...
HE'S REQUESTED TO MAKE HIMSELF KNOWN AND TO STATE THE TERMS UNDER WHICH HE WILL SELL HIS INVENTION TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.
HMM. WE'D NEVER LOSE A WAR IF WE HAD THAT THING.


EVERY OTHER NATION PUBLISHED NEARLY IDENTICAL NOTICES. THE WHOLE WORLD HAD BECOME AN AUCTION HOUSE RESOUNDING WITH EVER GREATER BIDS FOR THE AMAZING INVENTION...
FOR A TIME, THERE WAS NO RESPONSE FROM ANY QUARTER OF THE GLOBE...

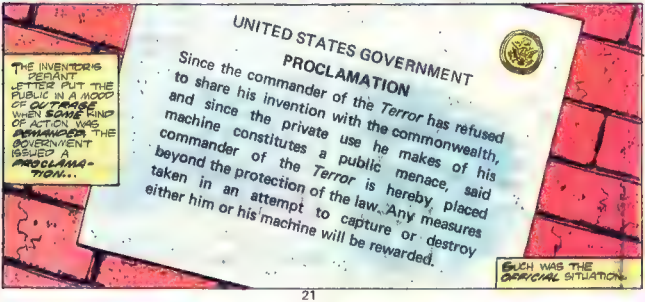

THEN A LETTER WAS DISCOVERED IN THE MAILBOX OF A NORTHEASTERN POLICE STATION...
aboard the terror
To the old and new worlds.
I refuse absolutely and definitely all sums offered for my invention. It will remain mine, and I shall use it as it pleases me. With it, I hold complete control of the world. Therefore, I sign this letter:
Master of the World

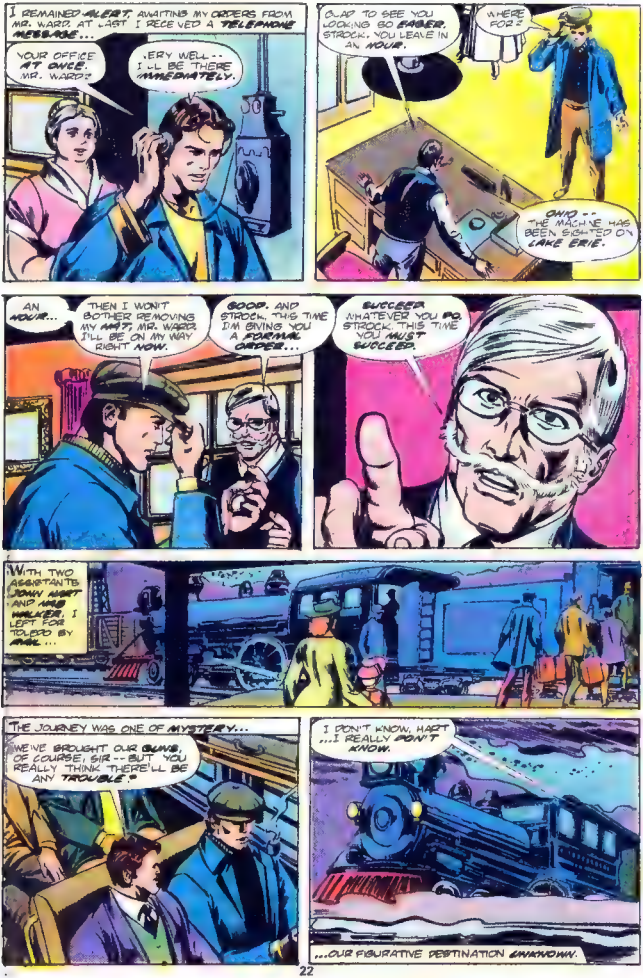

THE PAPERS CARRIED A DIRECT FACSIMILE OF THE LETTER...
IT'S THE SAME HAND-WRITING AS THE LETTER I RECEIVED FROM MORGRANTON -- SIGNED WITH THE INITIALS "M.O.W."...
OF COUSE -- MASTER OF THE WORLD!


THEN THE MAN WHO THREATENED ME & THEN COMMANDEER OF THIS VEHICLE IS ALSO THE "TERROR".
BUT WHAT CONNECTION IS THERE BETWEEN THE FIERY PHENOMENA OF THE GREAT EYRIE AND THE PERFORMANCES OF HIS FANTASTIC MACHINE.
1 DECIDED TO HASTEN TO POLICE HEAD-QUARTERS.


THERE, I SHOWED MY ORIGINAL LETTER TO CHIEF WARD..
THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE EXPLANATION -- THE GREAT EYRIE WAS THE SITE SELECTED BY THE "MASTER OF THE WORLD" TO GATHER HIS MATERIALS AND TO BUILD HIS "TERROR"

BUT HOW COULD HE GET HIS MATERIALS INTO THE GREAT EYRIE -- AND HOW COULD HE GET HIS MACHINE OUT?
PERHAPS, STROCK, THE MACHINE ALSO HAS WINGS, WHICH PERMIT IT TO TAKE REFUGE IN THE GREAT EYRIE BY FLYING.


THE INVENTOR'S PERSISTENT LETTER PUT THE PUBLIC IN A MOOD OF OUTRAGE WHEN SOME KIND OF ACTION WAS DEMANDED, THE GOVERNMENT ISSUED A PROCLAMATION...
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
PROCLAMATION
Since the commander of the Terror has refused to share his invention with the commonwealth, and since the private use he makes of his machine constitutes a public menace, said commander of the Terror is hereby placed beyond the protection of the law. Any measures taken in an attempt to capture or destroy either him or his machine will be rewarded.
SUCH WAS THE OFFICIAL SITUATION.


I REMAINED ALERT, AWAITING MY ORDERS FROM MR. WARD. AT LAST I RECEIVED A TELEPHONE MESSAGE...
YOUR OFFICE AT ONCE, MR. WARD!
VERY WELL -- I'LL BE THERE IMMEDIATELY.
GLAD TO SEE YOU LOOKING SO EARNER, STROCK. YOU LEAVE IN AN HOUR.
WHERE FOR?
OHIO -- THE MACHINE HAS BEEN SHIFTED ON LAKE ERIE.
AN HOUR...
THEN I WON'T BOTHER REMOVING MY HAT, MR. WARD. I'LL BE ON MY WAY RIGHT NOW.
GOOD. AND STROCK, THIS TIME I'M GIVING YOU A FORMAL ORDER...
SUCCEED WHATEVER YOU DO, STROCK. THIS TIME YOU MUST SUCCEED.
WITH TWO ASSISTANTS, JOHNNY HART AND HAL WALKER, I LEFT FOR TOLEDO BY AUTO...
THE JOURNEY WAS ONE OF MYSTERY...
WE'VE BROUGHT OUR GUNS, OF COURSE, SIR -- BUT YOU REALLY THINK THERE'LL BE ANY TROUBLE?
I DON'T KNOW, HART ...I REALLY DON'T KNOW.
...OUR FIGURATIVE DESTINATION UNKNOWN.

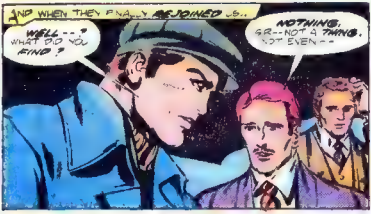
OUR CONTACT MET US AT THE TOLEDO STATION..
YOU MUST BE ARTHUR WELLS. ARE WE TO STAY HERE OVER-NIGHT?
NO WE LEAVE AT ONCE FOR OUR PRECISE DESTINATION.
IS IT FAR?
TWENTY MILES. THE PLACE IS CALLED BLACK ROCK CREEK--IT'S A TRIBUTARY OF LAKE ERIE.
OUR BAGS WERE TAKEN TO A HOTEL AS WE BOARDED A COACH FOR THE FINAL DRIVE..
YOU'VE GOT PROVISIONS HERE FOR A WEEK.
THE REGION IS AMONG THE MOST DESOLATE IN THE STATE...
WE'LL FIND NO INNS FOR OUR MEALS AND NO ROOMS FOR OUR SLEEP.
YOU REALIZE, WELLS, THAT IF WE'RE SUCCESSFUL THIS MISSION WILL NOT TAKE LONG, EITHER THE COMMANDER OF THE TERROR WILL BE CAPTURED BEFORE HE HAS A CHANCE TO ESCAPE, OR HE WILL TAKE TO FLIGHT AND WE'VE GOT ALL HOPE OF ARRESTING HIM.
IT IS A MATTER OF QUICK AND SIMPLE SUCCESS OR UTTER FAILURE.
ALL OR NOTHING EH? I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, STROCH...
IF HE TAKES OFF IN THIS BIZARRE MACHINE OF HIS, NO ONE WOULD HAVE A CHANCE OF INTERVENING HIM--
--EAST OF ALL US...IN THIS COACH.

AS WE JOUNCED ALONG, WELLS TOLD ME EVERYTHING HE KNEW...
I GLIMPSED THE SUBMARINE IN THE LAKE TWO DAYS AGO... I HEARD IN HORSEBURG YESTERDAY... THEN I FOLLOWED THE TRACKS OF THE SUBMARINE TO THE WOODS.
THEN I REAR-ED THE SUBMARINE HAS LEFT THE STREAM AND HEADED INTO THE WOODS.
I DOUBT IT. WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT A FEW HOURS... SEE... FROM... SAN... JOAN YESTERDAY THE SAME BOAT... HAD AN ACCIDENT... AND HAD TO BE BEACHED SO THE CREW COULD REPAIR IT.
QUITE A LOT OF STUFF WAS TAKEN FROM THE VESSEL AND STREWN ABOUT THE SHORE.
IT WAS SEVEN IN THE EVENING WHEN WE REACHED SOME WOODS NEAR THE SHORE OF LAKE ERIE.
ARE YOU SURE WE SHOULD STOP HERE?
YES, BUT WE'D BETTER LEAVE THE COACH DEEPER IN THE WOODS WHERE IT WON'T BE SEEN.
WE CAN REST HERE AND HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT.
THEN AS SOON AS IT'S COMPLETELY DARK... WE'LL GO BACK TO THE SOUTH OF THE STREAM ON FOOT.
THE HORSES WERE UNHARNESSED AND LEFT TO GRAZE. JOHN HART AND HIS MASTER MADE A MEAL ON THE GRASS...
F... [illegible] SHE SETTLED TO DARKNESS...
I'LL DO SOME.

WE SOON REACHED THE BANKS OF BLACK ROCK CREEK...
I SEE HIS DESERTED, NEILS.
WE-- SEE... AND SOON ENOUGH.

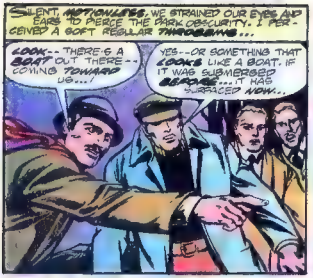
A FEW MINUTES' WALKING BROUGHT US TO THE PRECISE SPOT. THERE WAS NOTHING.
DO-- UNDERSTAND...!
I WAS HERE--RIGHT HERE.

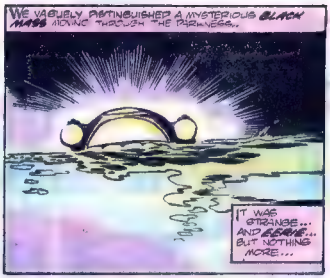
WELLS AND I STOOD THERE, COMPLETELY CRUSHED, WHILE HURST AND WALKER SEARCHED THE BANKS OF THE CREEK FOR CLUES.

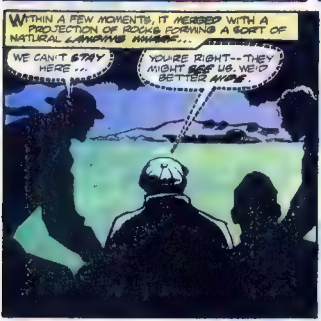

AND WHEN THEY FINALLY REJOINED US...
WELL--? WHAT DID YOU FIND?
NOTHING. GR--NOT A THING. NOT EVEN--

AT THAT MOMENT, WATER ABRUPTLY EXPLODED ON THE ROCKS AT OUR FEET...
IT'S LIKE THE SPRAY FROM A PASSING VESSEL.

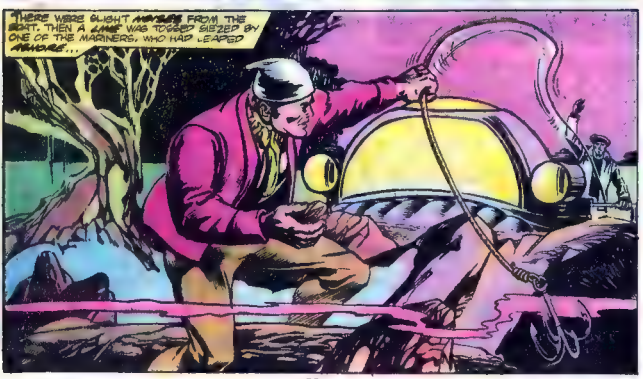
PERHAPS IT WAS CAUSED BY SOMETHING OUT ON THE LAKE...
NO--LOOK AT THE CURIOUS MOTIONS OF THE TURBULENCE. IT COMES FROM SOMETHING UNDER-NEATH THE SURFACE.


SILENT, MOTIONLESS, WE STRAINED OUR EYES AND EARS TO PIERCE THE PARK-DARKNESS... I PERCEIVED A SOFT REGULAR THROBBING...
LOOK-- THERE'S A BOAT OUT THERE-- COMING TOWARD US...!
YES--OR SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE A BOAT. IF IT WAS SUBMERGED BEFORE... IT HAS SURFACED NOW...

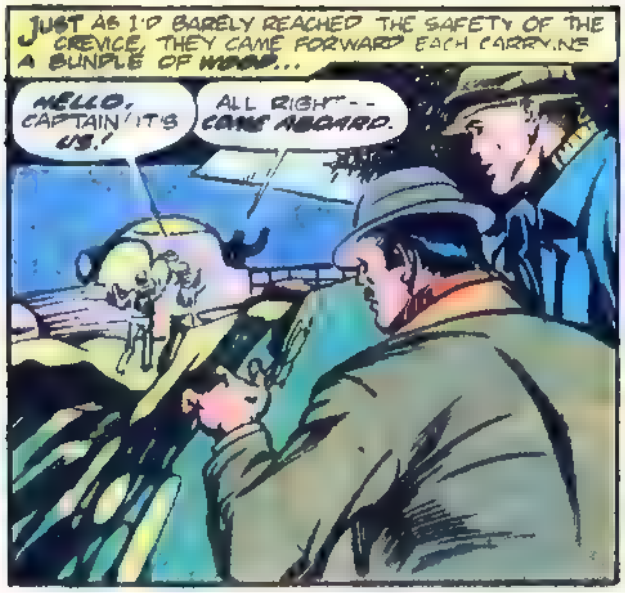

WE VAGUELY DISTINGUISHED A MYSTERIOUS BLACK MASS MOVING THROUGH THE PARK-WATERS...
IT WAS STRANGE... AND ALARMING... BUT NOTHING MORE...


WITHIN A FEW MOMENTS, IT MERGED WITH A PROJECTION OF ROCKS FORMING A SORT OF NATURAL LANDING WHARF...
WE CAN'T STAY HERE...
YOU'RE RIGHT--THEY MIGHT SEE US. WE'D BETTER WADE.

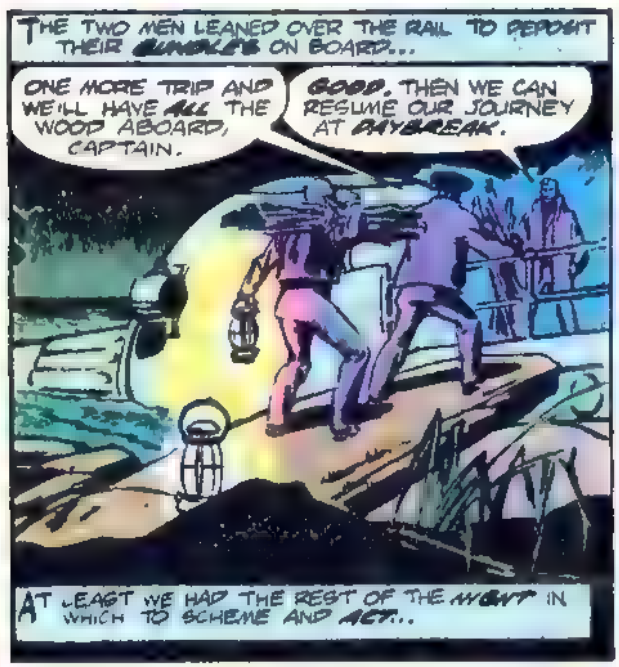
WE CREPT BACK TO THE ROCKS WHERE WELLS AND I CROUCHED IN ONE CREVICE, MY TWO ASSISTANTS IN ANOTHER...
THIS IS A GOOD SPOT. IF THEY COME ASHORE, THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE US BUT WE WILL BE ABLE TO SEE THEM...
I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, STROCK. I DON'T LIKE THIS AT ALL.


THERE WERE SLIGHT MURMURS FROM THE BOAT. THEN A LINE WAS TOSSED SEIZED BY ONE OF THE MARINERS, WHO HAD LEAPED ASHORE...

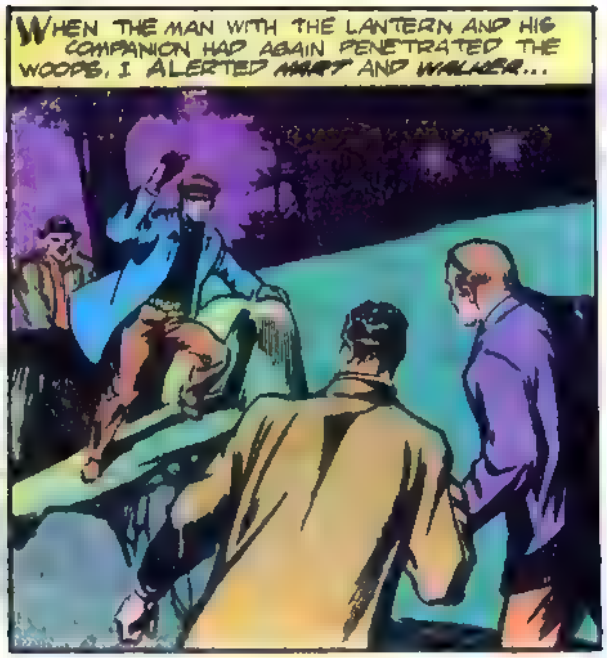
MOMENTS LATE STEPS REACHED THE SAND...
STEN...
TWO MEN -- MARINERS -- CAME UP THE RAVINE...
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
WELL... JUST WAIT HERE 'TIL THEY RETURN. AND THEN --
GOOD LORD...!
MY WORDS WERE CUT SHORT BY A GASP, AS THE TWO MEN HAD CONTINUED ONWARD TOWARD THE WOODS, ONE OF THEM CHANCED TO TURN...
...AND THE LIGHT FROM THE LANTERN FELL FULL UPON HIS FACE.
HE'S ONE OF THE TWO MEN WHO WERE GOING ON MY HOUSE!
WHEN THE TWO MARINERS HAD VANISHED INTO THE WOODS, I CAUTIOUSLY DESCENDED FROM MY HIDING PLACE TO THE ROCK QUAY, THE TERMOR MY QUIET AT THE END OF ITS MOORING CABLE...
THEN, BEFORE I COULD INSPECT THE BIZARRE VESSEL MORE CLOSELY IN THE DARKNESS, WE WERE CALLED TO BE URGENTLY...
STROCK! THE TWO MEN -- THEY'RE RETURNING!
I QUICKLY DREW BACK, HOPING THE THUNDEROUS SOUND OF MY HEART WOULD NOT BETRAY ME.


JUST AS I'D BARELY REACHED THE SAFETY OF THE CREVICE, THEY CAME FORWARD EACH CARRYING A BUNDLE OF WOOD...
HELLO, CAPTAIN! IT'S US!
ALL RIGHT--COME ABOARD.

THEN THERE ARE THREE OF THEM!
YES, PERHAPS FOUR--EVEN FIVE OR SIX.


THE TWO MEN LEANED OVER THE RAIL TO DEPOSIT THEIR BUNDLES ON BOARD...
ONE MORE TRIP AND WE'LL HAVE ALL THE WOOD ABOARD, CAPTAIN.
GOOD. THEN WE CAN RESUME OUR JOURNEY AT DAYBREAK.
AT LEAST WE HAD THE REST OF THE NIGHT IN WHICH TO SCHEME AND ACT..

ONCE THEY'VE TAKEN THE LAST OF THEIR WOOD ABOARD THEY EVIDENTLY PLAN TO RETIRE FOR THE NIGHT WITHIN THEIR MACHINE.
THAT'LL BE THE BEST TIME TO SURPRISE THEM--WHILE THEY'RE ASLEEP, AND BEFORE THEY HAVE A CHANCE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES.


WHEN THE MAN WITH THE LANTERN AND HIS COMPANION HAD AGAIN PENETRATED THE WOODS, I ALERTED MART AND WALKER...

...AND THEN WE WAITED.
CHECK YOUR REVOLVERS. I HOPE I'M WRONG, BUT I HAVE A FEELING WE'LL NEED THEM.

FIVE MINUTES PASSED BEFORE WE HEARD A LOUD NOISE, AND THEN...

KERBLAM

THE HORSES--THEY'RE BOLTING!

THERE WAS THE THUNDER OF FURIOUS GALLOPING, RECEDING INTO THE DISTANCE...

THEN THE TWO MEN REAPPEARED RUNNING AT FULL SPEED...

THEY MUST'VE DISCOVERED OUR ENCAMPMENT--DRIVEN OFF THE HORSES!

GET READY FOR THE!!

AS THEY RECKLESSLY RUSHED DOWN THE RAVINE AHEAD US...

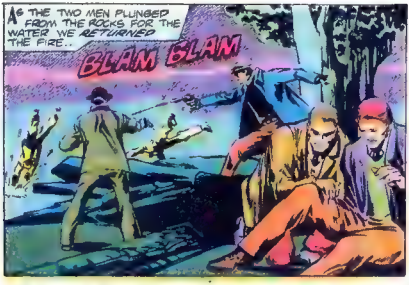
NOW!! STOP THEM!!

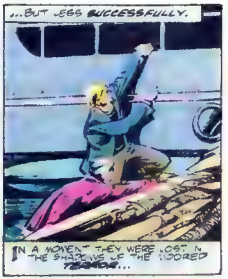
WE SCRAMBLED DOWN THE SIDES OF THE RAVINE TO CUT THEM OFF FROM THE TARASCA, BUT..

BLAM!

AARON!!

--JOHN HART WAS HIT IN THE LEG.


AS THE TWO MEN PLUNGED FROM THE ROCKS FOR THE WATER WE RETURNED THE FIRE..
BLAM BLAM

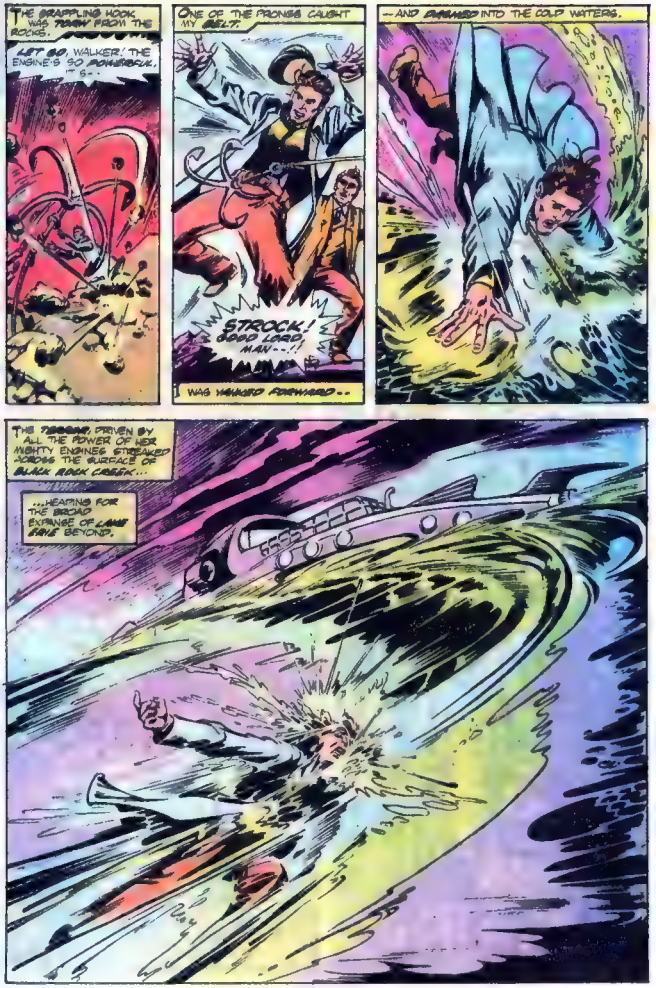

..BUT LESS SUCCESSFULLY.
IN A MOMENT THEY WERE LOST IN THE SHADOWS OF THE MOORED TRAWLERS...

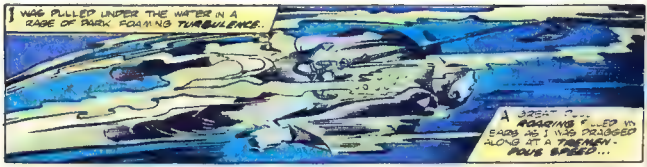
WE SPRINTED FOR THE MOORING LINE AS THEIR CAPTAIN SPRANG FORWARD HOLDING A PISTOL.
HURRY UP AND GET HIM ABOARD, YOU FOOL!

THE CAPTAIN FIRED..
GET TO THE ENGINE ROOM -- FULL SPEED OUT OF HERE!
BLAM
GRAZING WELLS.

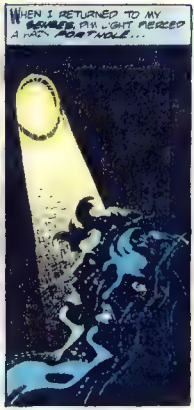
NAT WALKER AND I SEIZED THE MOORING LINE AND BEGAN PULLING THE BLACK MASS OF THE VESSEL TOWARDS SHORE.
I JUST HOPE THEY DON'T CUT THE ROPE IN TIME TO--

SUDDENLY THE LINE WENT TAUT BURNING OUR HANDS...
THEY'RE TAKING OFF WITHOUT CUTTING THE LINE--!


THE GRAPPLING HOOK WAS TORN FROM THE ROCKS.
LET GO, WALKER! THE ENGINE'S SO POWERFUL, IT'S--
ONE OF THE PRONGS CAUGHT MY BELT.
STROCK! GOOD LORD, MAN--!
I WAS HAULED FORWARD--
--AND PLUNGED INTO THE COLD WATERS.
THE TORPEDO, DRIVEN BY ALL THE POWER OF HER MIGHTY ENGINES STREAKED ACROSS THE SURFACE OF BLACK ROCK CREEK...
...HEADING FOR THE BROAD EXPANSE OF LAKE ERIE BEYOND.


I WAS PULLED UNDER THE WATER IN A RAGE OF DARK FOAMING TURBULENCE.
A JOLT ROCKETED THROUGH MY EARS AS I WAS DRAGGED ALONG AT A TREMENDOUS SPEED...

THEN EVERYTHING WAS BLACK... AND FATAL... PEACEFUL..


WHEN I RETURNED TO MY SENSES, DAYLIGHT PIERCED A HAZY MORTHOLE...

SOMEONE HAD PLACED ME IN A MEADOW GRASS. I FELT NO SERIOUS INJURY ONLY A DULL GENERAL PAIN... AND IMMENSE WEARINESS.
THEN THEY MUST'VE DRAGGED ME FROM THE LAKE ..UNTANGLED ME FROM THE CABLE..
LUCKY I DIDN'T DROWN

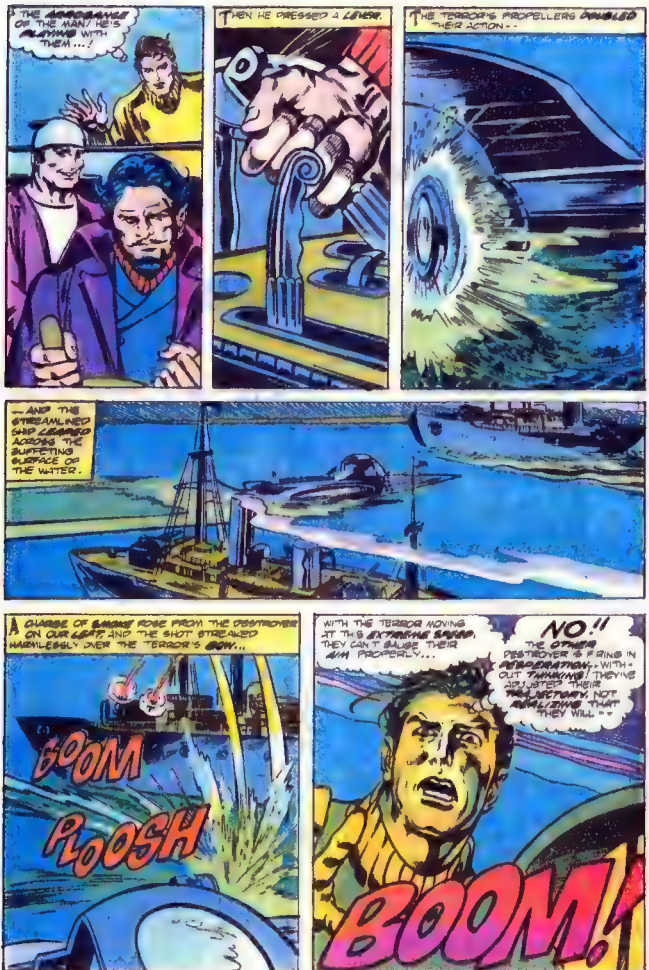
I CRAWLED FROM THE BUNK AND DRESSED WITH SOME DIFFICULTY... BUT THE HATCH ABOVE MY HEAD OPENED EASILY.

I ASCENDED TO FIND THE VESSEL STILL CRUISING AT GREAT SPEED..
NO SHORELINE IN SIGHT--WE MUST BE FAR OUT ON LAKE ERIE.

There were two other men on deck, the same two we had chased down the ravine at Black Rock Creek...
Well, nothing ventured, nothing gained - I might as well approach them...
I reached the one on lookout first, the one who had stared on me in Washington...
I wish to ask you some questions.
First, where is your captain?
He acknowledged my presence in no way or form whatsoever...
Just turning his back, he proceeded to scan the far horizon.
Well... something ventured and still nothing gained.
Try. Try, man, I suppose!..
I moved toward the stern, but the helmsman waved me away...
Well, that settles the scores between ventured and gained - resulting in complete bankruptcy.
All that remained for me was a study of the remarkable vessel...
Metal - - but a metal I've never seen before. Can't even recognize it as an alloy of known elements...
A hatch in the center of the deck covered the almost silently regular engines...
They can't be driven by steam or gasoline - - which leaves electricity, generated right here on board as the only known alternative.

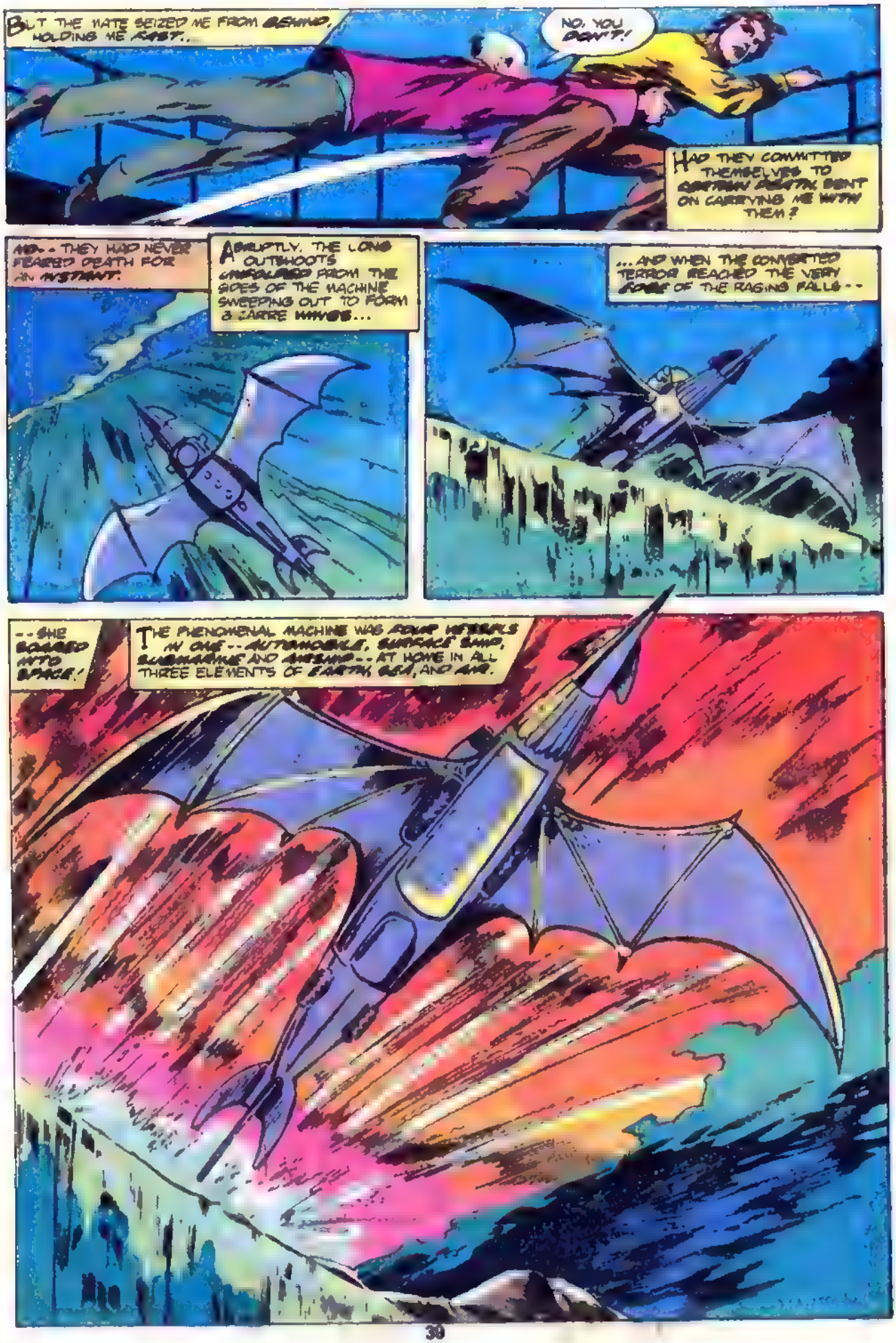
AT THE BOW AND STERN WERE HATCHWAYS LEADING TO THE CABINS. PRESUMABLY. THERE WERE NO MASTS OR RIGGING... CLEARLY, THIS VESSEL CIRCUMVENTED THE WINDS.
TOWARD THE BOW THERE ROSE THE TOP OF A WINDSCOOP...
ON THE DECKS OF THE SHIP TWO WATCHING SENTINELS WERE ROUSED BACK...
WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE THEY--AND WHAT ABERRATION CAN THEY POSSIBLY SERVE?
GRIM THOUGHTS OCCUPIED ME AS I AWAITED THE MYSTERIOUS CAPTAIN'S APPEARANCE ON DECK. MOST FOREBODING OF ALL WAS THE FACT THAT I HAD AGAIN FAILED...
CAN I ESCAPE--OUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS GODFORSAKEN LAKE?
DO I HAVE TO ESCAPE--BEFORE LEARNING THE TERRIBLE SECRETS?
I DIDN'T KNOW.
NEAR TWO O'CLOCK, THE MAN I HAD SO INSISTENTLY AWAITED... FINALLY APPEARED...
GOOD LORD! HE'S THE OTHER MAN WHO BOARDED ON MY HOUSE--!
WELL, PERHAPS HE'LL AT LEAST HAVE THE DECENCY TO ANSWER ME.
I CAUGHT UP TO HIM IN THE MIDSHIPMAN'S CABIN...
ARE YOU THE CAPTAIN?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN TO DO WITH ME--?
WHEN THERE WAS NO RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONS--
--A FIERCE BLAZE OF ANGER ALMOST OVERCAME ME.
OF ALL THE...!
FORTUNATELY, I WAS ABLE TO RESTRAIN MYSELF WELL AWARE OF MY HELPLESS POSITION.

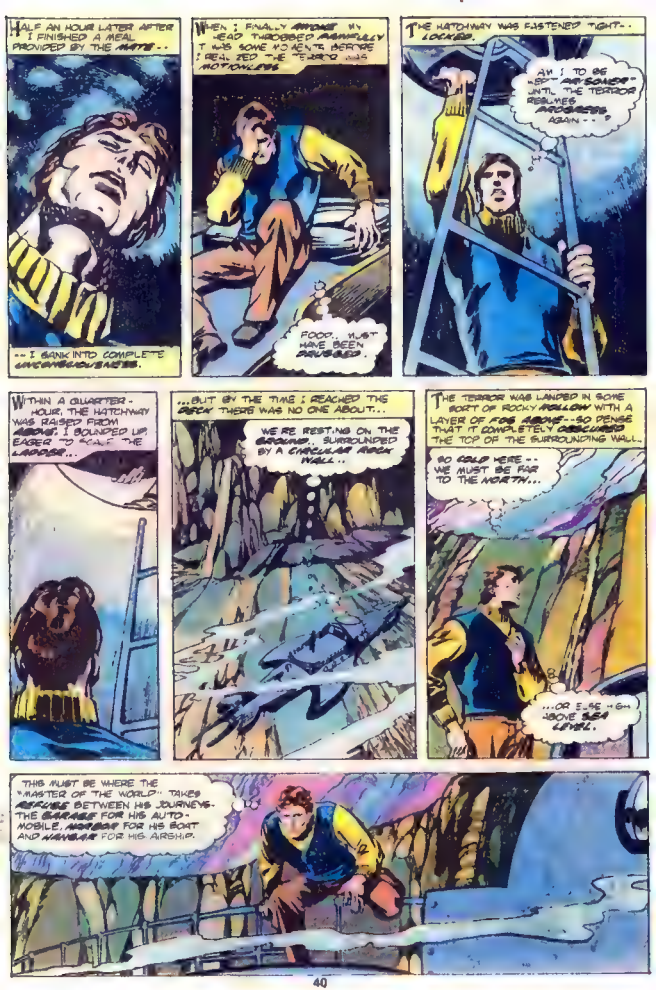
I WENT TO THE RAIL NEAR MY HATCHWAY, RESIGNED TO A PATIENT WATCH OF THE HORIZON...
BEFORE THE DAY IS OVER WE'LL REACH THE END OF LAKE ERIE -- AND THAT MEANS THE ONLY OUTLET IS THE NIAGARA RIVER...
BUT ITS FALLS ARE IMPASSABLE -- EVEN TO A FANTASTIC MACHINE LIKE THIS.
WHAT IN CREATION DOES THE CAPTAIN MEAN TO DO--?
THE HOURS PASSED SLOWLY. WE WERE NOW APPROACHING BUFFALO, NEW YORK...
AT LENGTH, THE MATE POINTED OUT AT TWO LONG, LOW STREAMERS IN THE DISTANCE.
THEY'RE TORPEDO DESTROYERS! WELLS MUST HAVE ALERTED THE NAVY
THEY'RE SUBMARINES... HOPING TO ENCLOSE THE TERROR BETWEEN THEIR FIRE.
OUR CAPTAIN PERMITTED THE TWO DESTROYERS TO APPROACH EVEN CLOSER...
HE DID NOT SEEM CONCERNED.


THE ARROGANCE OF THE MAN! HE'S PLAYING WITH THEM...!
THEN HE PRESSED A LEVER.
THE TERROR'S PROPELLERS DOUBLED THEIR ACTION--
--AND THE STREAMLINED SHIP LEAPED ACROSS THE BUFFETING SURFACE OF THE WATER.
A GUSHER OF SMOKE ROSE FROM THE DESTROYER ON OUR LEFT, AND THE SHOT STREAKED HARMLESSLY OVER THE TERROR'S BOW...
BOOM
PLOOSH
WITH THE TERROR MOVING AT THIS EXTRAORDINARY SPEED, THEY CAN'T ADJUST THEIR AIM PROPERLY...
NO!!
THE OTHER DESTROYER IS FIRING IN DESPERATION--WITH-OUT THINKING! THEY'VE ADJUSTED THEIR TRAJECTORY, NOT REALIZING THAT THEY WILL--
BOOM!

"...HIT THE FIRST DESTROYER!!"
WHRAMM
NOOO!!
AT THAT MOMENT, I WAS SEIZED FROM BEHIND--
--AND HURLED ABRUPTLY DOWN THE HATCHWAY OF MY CABIN.
HEY--! WHAT ARE YOU--
THE HATCH SLAMMED SHUT ABOVE ME...
I HEARD A SINGLE THROB OF POWERFUL MACHINERY...
...AND THE TERROR BECAME A SUBMARINE...
...SLASHING BENEATH THE LAPPING WAVES OF THE LAKE.
WE SPED SILENTLY THROUGH THE DEPTHS FOR A TIME, BUT HARDLY TEN MINUTES HAD PASSED BEFORE I HEARD SOUNDS OF CONFUSION.
THE STEADILY HUMMING MACHINERY GREW HARSH AND ERRATIC...
HAS THERE BEEN AN ACCIDENT--?

YES-- I CAN FEEL US RISING. SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO CAUSE US TO THE SURFACE.
I WAS NOT MISTAKEN. THE HATCH SPRANG OPEN EASILY..
THE DESTROYERS ARE STILL IN VIEW-- AND GIVING CHASE!
AT LEAST THE ONE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN DAMAGED HEAVILY...
LOOKING AHEAD, I SAW THAT THE MOUTH OF THE NIAGARA RIVER WAS NOW WITHIN SIGHT..
IF HE ENTERS THOSE DANGEROUS WATERS, THEN THIS "MASTER OF THE WORLD" WILL BE TRULY NEARE. WITHIN FIFTEEN MINUTES, WE'LL REACH THE POINT OF NO RETURN--NIAGARA'S FALLS.
ALTHOUGH THE TWO DESTROYERS WERE ONLY A FEW CABLE-LENGTHS BEHIND, THE CAPTAIN EXHIBITED NO ALARM WHATSOEVER..
HE IS MAD! FOLLOWING THERE COURSE IT'S TRUE WE'LL RUIN THE DESTROYERS--
--BUT ONLY BECAUSE THEY'LL ENDEAVOR TO PLUNGE INTO THE ABYSS AFTER US..
INDEED THEY HALTED PLARU T IMMEDIATELY. SEVERAL LAST CANNON SHOTS SWEPT OVER THE TERROR'S LOW-LYING DECK..
KOOSH! KOOSH
THE TREACHEROUS FALLS LOOMED AHEAD. IN ANOTHER FEW MOMENTS WE WOULD DASH AGAINST THE ROCKS AND BE WASHED OVER THE CREST INTO A POUNDING DELUGE..
I LUNGED FORWARD, INTENDING TO HURL MYSELF OVER THE RAIL IN A LAST DESPERATE BID FOR SALVATION...


BUT THE HATE SEIZED ME FROM BEHIND, HOLDING ME FAST..
NO, YOU DON'T!
HAD THEY COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO CERTAIN DEATH, BENT ON CARRYING ME WITH THEM?
NO.. THEY HAD NEVER FEARED DEATH FOR AN INSTANT.
ABRUPTLY, THE LONG OUTHOOTS UNFOLDED FROM THE SIDES OF THE MACHINE SWEEPING OUT TO FORM A JARRE WINGS...
...AND WHEN THE CONVERTED TERROR REACHED THE VERY EDGE OF THE RAGING FALLS..
..SHE SOARED INTO SPACE!
THE PHENOMENAL MACHINE WAS FOUR VEHICLES IN ONE--AUTOMOBILE, SURFACE SKIMMER, SUBMARINE AND AIRSHIP--AT HOME IN ALL THREE ELEMENTS OF EARTH, SEA, AND AIR.


HALF AN HOUR LATER AFTER I FINISHED A MEAL PROVIDED BY THE MATE..
-- I SANK INTO COMPLETE UNCONSCIOUSNESS.
WHEN I FINALLY ATTAINED MY HEAD THROBBED PAINFULLY IT WAS SOME MOMENTS BEFORE I REALIZED THE TRUTH AND MOTIVATION
FOOD.. YUM! HAVE BEEN DRUGGED
THE HATCHWAY WAS FASTENED TIGHT.. LOCKED.
AH! I TO BE KEPT AWFULLY SOUND UNTIL THE TERROR RESUMES ACTIVITIES AGAIN..
WITHIN A QUARTER-HOUR, THE HATCHWAY WAS RAISED FROM ABOVE! I BOUNCED UP EAGER TO SCALE THE LADDER..
...BUT BY THE TIME I REACHED THE DECK THERE WAS NO ONE ABOUT..
WE'RE RESTING ON THE GROUND.. SURROUNDED BY A CIRCULAR ROCK WALL..
THE TERROR WAS LANDED IN SOME SORT OF ROCKY HOLLOW WITH A LAYER OF FOG ABOVE! SO DENSE THAT IT COMPLETELY OBSCURED THE TOP OF THE SURROUNDING WALL.
SO COLD HERE.. WE MUST BE FAR TO THE NORTH...
...OR EVEN HIGH ABOVE SEA LEVEL.
THIS MUST BE WHERE THE "MASTER OF THE WORLD" TAKES REFUGE BETWEEN HIS JOURNEYS. THE GARAGE FOR HIS AUTO-MOBILE, HARBOR FOR HIS BOAT AND HANGAR FOR HIS AIRSHIP.

I SAW THE TERRORS THREE CREWMEN DISAPPEAR INTO A GROTTO IN THE ROCK WALL...
IT GAVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION OF THE TERROR.
I KNOW THAT IT FEATURES INVERTS, TURBINE SCREWS AND WINGS, BUT IT IS UNLIKE ANY KNOWN TYPE OF FLYING OR WATER CRAFT.
THE NEXT MYSTERY TO BE SOLVED WAS THE LOCATION OF THIS ROCKY HOLLOW...
I QUITE BELIEVE WE'RE INSIDE THE GIANT ISLAND, IT CERTAINLY OFFERS AN UNUSUALLY SAFE HAVEN FROM ALL ATTACKS...
HAVING RESOLVED TO EXPLORE MY ENVIRONMENT I MOVED TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TERROR... WHERE I FOUND A PILE OF CHARRED ALLOYS, GLASS, AND BLACKENED PIECES OF METAL...
CLEARLY SOME INTRICATE MECHANISM WAS DESTROYED HERE BY FLAMES--
WHICH WOULD EXPLAIN THE PHENOMENA OF FIRE AND SMOKE THAT FRIGHTENED THE PEOPLE OF MORGANTON.
HEADING FOOT-STEPS BEHIND ME I TURNED...
THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP
AND YOU, ARE...?
I AM ADOLPH COX... ADOLF THE CONQUEROR!
...TO FIND MYSELF FACING THE IMPERIOUS CAPTAIN OF THE TERROR.
SO YOU'RE READY TO SURRENDER TO ME AT LAST--AND YOU ARE, OBVIOUSLY, THE "MASTER OF THE WORLD" --?
OF THE WORLD TO WHICH I HAVE ALREADY PENETRATED MYSELF TO BE THE MOST POWERFUL OF ALL MEN
HE DID NOT LACK CONFIDENCE.

ROBUR... THE CONQUEROR...!
YEARS BEFORE, THE STORY OF THIS EXTRAORDINARY MAN HAD BEEN REPORTED IN THE NEWSPAPERS. AMONG OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS, HE WAS THE INVENTOR OF A WONDERFUL AIRSHIP CALLED THE ALBATROSS.*
*AS DOCUMENTED IN JULES VERNE'S EARLIER NOVEL, ROBUR THE CONQUEROR. --EDITOR.
AS FOR WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN THE YEARS SINCE THE FINAL DEPARTURE OF THE ALBATROSS, I COULD ONLY ASSUME. APPARENTLY, ROBUR WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE CREATION OF A MERE FLYING MACHINE, AS FABULOUS AS IT WAS...
AND SO HE DESIGNED A VEHICLE CAPABLE OF CONQUERING ALL THE ELEMENTS.
PROBABLY IN THE IMMENSE WORKSHOPS OF HIS QUARTERS ON "X ISLAND", IN THE SOUTH ARCTIC, HIS WORKMEN HAD CONSTRUCTED--ONE BY ONE--THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF WHAT WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME THE TERROR.
THEN THE ALBATROSS MUST HAVE TRANSPORTED THESE COMPONENTS TO THE GREAT STATUE, WHERE THEY WERE FINALLY REASSEMBLED...
...THUS GIVING BIRTH TO THE INCREDIBLE TERROR.
IT WAS NOT SURPRISING, THEN, THAT ROBUR'S PRIDE AND HAUGHTINESS HAD INCREASED, LITTLE BY LITTLE, UNTIL HE NOW PRESUMED TO ENSLAVE THE ENTIRE WORLD...
HE'S POWER-MAD... OBSESSED -- AND PROBABLY DRIVEN TO EXTREME VIOLENCE UNDER THE LEAST PROVOCATION. A MOST DANGEROUS MAN...

As Robur left me without further word I returned my attention to the *charred rubble*...

These burned fragments could be all that remains of the *Albatross*--destroyed here either by *accident* or *design*...

As the day wore on, Robur and his men worked on the terror, making considerable *repairs* to the machine. I studied Robur in particular.

He seemed to be obsessed with *constant excitement*--as if these defects in his *machine* somehow weaken him as a *man*.

At times he would wander around the grotto, buried in *deeply troubled thought*, oblivious to his surroundings...

...perhaps possessed by the demons of his *advanced technologies*, of his own estranged *genius*.

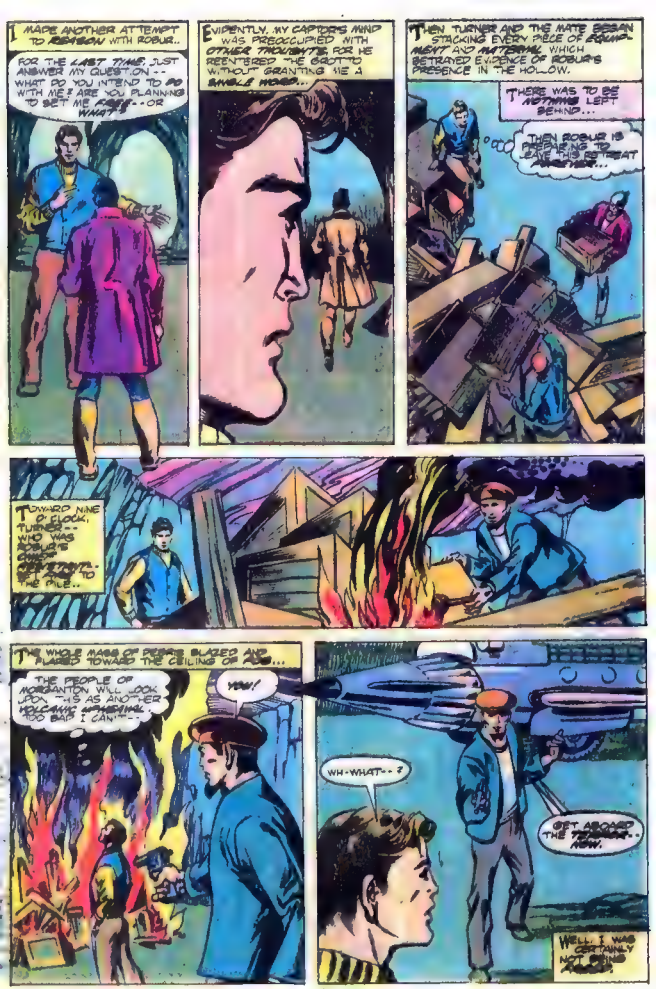
And often he would stop and raise his fist toward heaven, as if in angry *defiance* of almighty *God*.

His overwhelming pride was brought him to the verge of *insanity*. He places so much worth on his own creation that he dares to challenge the *creator of all worlds*!

And this is the man in whose hands my *fate is held*.

They worked for *four days* on the repairs. On the fourth day they began loading *supplies* aboard...

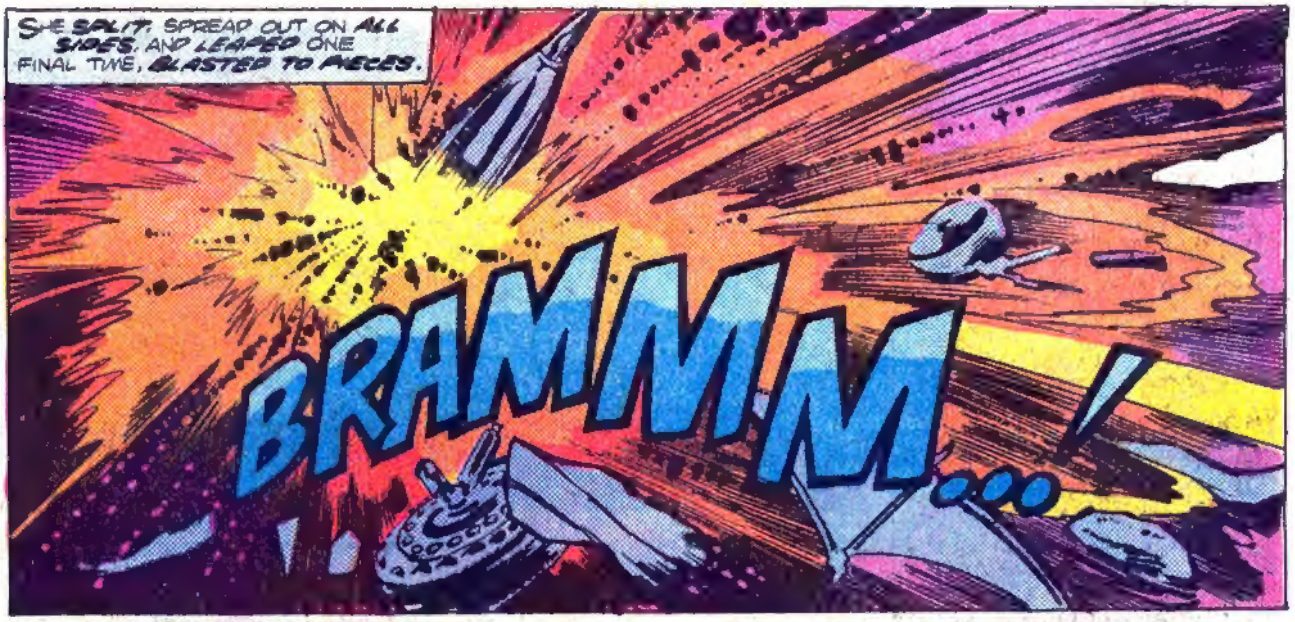
The terror was ready for *another departure*.


I MADE ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO RESIGN WITH ROBUR..
FOR THE LAST TIME, JUST ANSWER MY QUESTION -- WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO WITH ME? ARE YOU PLANNING TO SET ME FREE? -- OR WHAT?
EVIDENTLY, MY CAPTOR'S MIND WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH OTHER THOUGHTS, FOR HE REENTERED THE GROTTO WITHOUT GRANTING ME A SINGLE WORD..
THEN TURNER AND THE MATE BEGAN STACKING EVERY PIECE OF EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL WHICH BETRAYED EVIDENCE OF ROBUR'S PRESENCE IN THE HOLLOW.
THERE WAS TO BE NOTHING LEFT BEHIND..
THEN ROBUR IS PREPARING TO LEAVE THIS RETREAT FOREVER..
TOWARD NINE P.M. I OVERLOOK, TURNER -- WHO WAS ROBUR'S CHIEF ASSISTANT -- TO THE PILE..
THE WHOLE MASS OF PEBBLE BLAZED AND FLARED TOWARD THE CEILING OF ICE...
THE PEOPLE OF NORDANTON WILL LOOK UP... IS THAT A FLARE? YOU CAN'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU!
WOW!
WH-WHAT--?
GET ABOARD THE TRACTOR... NOW.
WELL, I WAS CERTAINLY NOT BEING ROBUR!

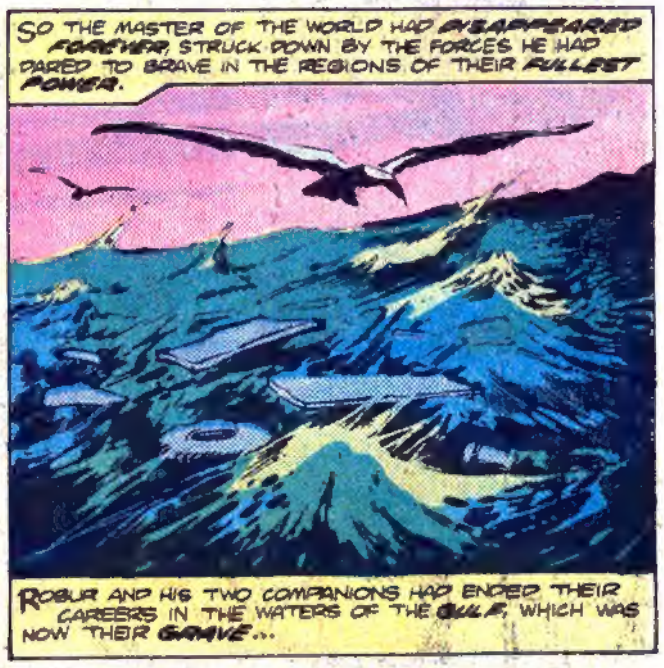
I WAS FORCED TO DESCEND INTO MY CABIN.
BUT WHERE ARE WE GOING?
JUST GET DOWN HERE AND BE QUIET. MY GUN DECIDES OUR COURSE.
THAT'S WHAT I'M AFRAID OF, MR. TURNER --AND I'VE A FEELING YOU SHOULD FEAR THE SAME.
THROUGHOUT THAT NIGHT, I WAS NOT PERMITTED TO OBSERVE THE TERROR'S MOVEMENTS, AND COULD ONLY ASSUME THAT THE CRAFT HAD LOST CONTACT WITH EARTH...
WELL, WE'VE LEFT THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE...BUT IN WHAT DIRECTION HAVE WE TRAVELED?
AT LENGTH, THE FIRST RAYS OF DAWN BRIGHTENED MY CABIN. FOR SOME REASON, I ASSUMED THE HATCH WOULD NOW BE OPEN.
I WAS RIGHT!
WE ARE OVER KANSAS--AND SINCE THE POSITION OF THE SUN INDICATES WE'RE HEADING SOUTH, IT MUST BE THE GULF OF MEXICO.
HEAVY STORM CLOUDS CLING TO THE FAR HORIZON BEFORE US, BUT OUR FLIGHT CONTINUES WITH OUT HESITATION OR ALTERATION...
DOES THE MAN CARE ABOUT NOTHING...?
IN THE AFTERNOON, WHEN WE SETTLED DOWN UPON THE SURFACE OF THE SEA, THERE WAS NOT YET ANY IMMEDIATE SIGN OF BAD WEATHER...
THE TERROR IS LIKE A BIRD OF PREY... ABLE TO SWOOP AT WILL UPON THE WAVES...
LET'S HOPE SHE CAN ALSO RIDE STRONG.

By EVENING, HOWEVER THE STORM WAS AT HAND - AND I WAS COMPELLED TO RETREAT TO MY CABIN...
FIVE MINUTES LATER WE HAD SUBMERGED AND WERE CRUISING ABNORMALLY THROUGH THE DEEP...
I DECIDED TO SLEEP.
WHEN I AWOKE, I FELT THE PITCHING AND TOSSING OF A HEAVY SEA...
WE'VE SUBMERGED AGAIN-- BUT WHY?
THERE COULD BE NO DOUBTING IT-- A VIOLENT STORM WAS APPROACHING RAPIDLY.
THE WIND WAS UNLEASHED IN TERRIBLE FURY AND THE SEA ROSE IN TOWERING WALLS OF DESTRUCTION...
WHY DOESN'T ROBUR CONVERT THE TERROR INTO A SUBMARINE AGAIN--?! AT LEAST IT COULD FIND SAFETY BENEATH THE WAVES
BUT ROBUR, HIS EYES BURNING MORE WILDLY THAN EVER BEFORE, LOOKED THE STORM FULL IN THE FACE--AS IF TO DEFY IT
WE MUST SUBMERGE! ROBUR IS COMPLETELY INSANE!
OR PERHAPS HE'S SOME ARCHAIC DEMIGOD-- ESCAPED FROM SOME SUPERNATURAL WORLD OF HELL!
HE THINKS HE CAN CHALLENGE-- AND LITERALLY CONQUER-- THE VERY ELEMENTS!!

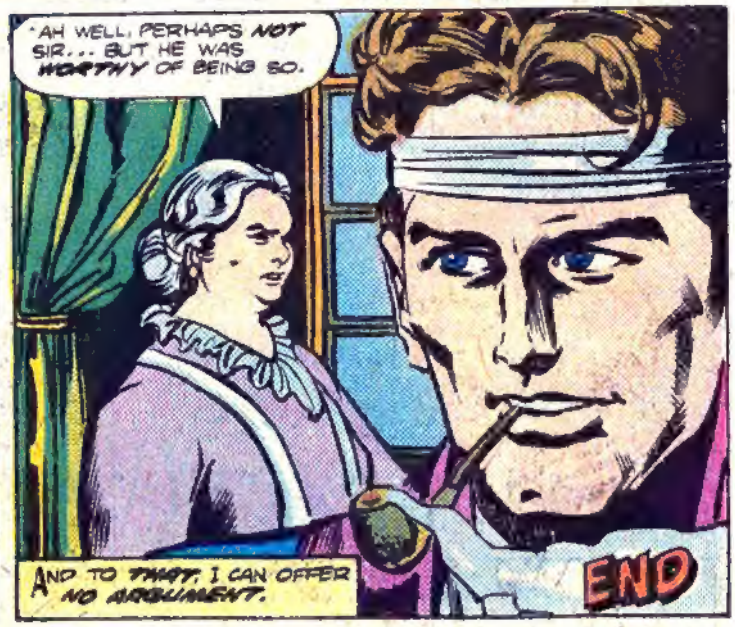
A BELLOW OF INVENTED RAGE BURST FROM HIS THROAT, HEARD ABOVE THE HOWLING OF THE TEMPEST AND THE EXPLOSIONS OF THUNDER...
I AM ROBUR! ROBUR THE CONQUEROR -- MASTER OF THE WORLD!!
HE SLAPPED A LEVER WITH FORCE ENOUGH TO KILL. THE GREAT WINGS SHOT OUTWARD--
--AND THE GROTESQUE AIRSHIP STREAKED FOR THE VERY HEART OF THE WILD HURRICANE!
IT SCARED UPWARD AMIDST A THOUSAND JAGGED FLASHES OF LIGHTNING. SHAKEN BY TREMENDOUS CONCUSSIONS OF THUNDER-- COURTING CATACLYSMIC DESTRUCTION EVERY MOMENT...
THEN, AS ROBUR PILOTED HIS MIRACULOUS MACHINE INTO THE VERY CENTER OF THE STORM--
NOOOOO!!
I LEANED FOR HIM IN PANIC, FEELING A TINGLING BUZZ COURSING THROUGH MY VEINS...
I NEVER REACHED HIM, FOR THE TERROR I WAS SUDDENLY WRACKED BY VIOLENT TREMORS...
THERE WAS A FLASH OF BLINDING GLARE, AND ROBUR STAGGERED-- THEN CONVULSED IN AGONY!
THE TERROR WAS NOW IN THE THRALL OF A GREATER POWER.
SHE HAD BEEN STRUCK BY THE FULL POWER OF A BOLT OF LIGHTNING.

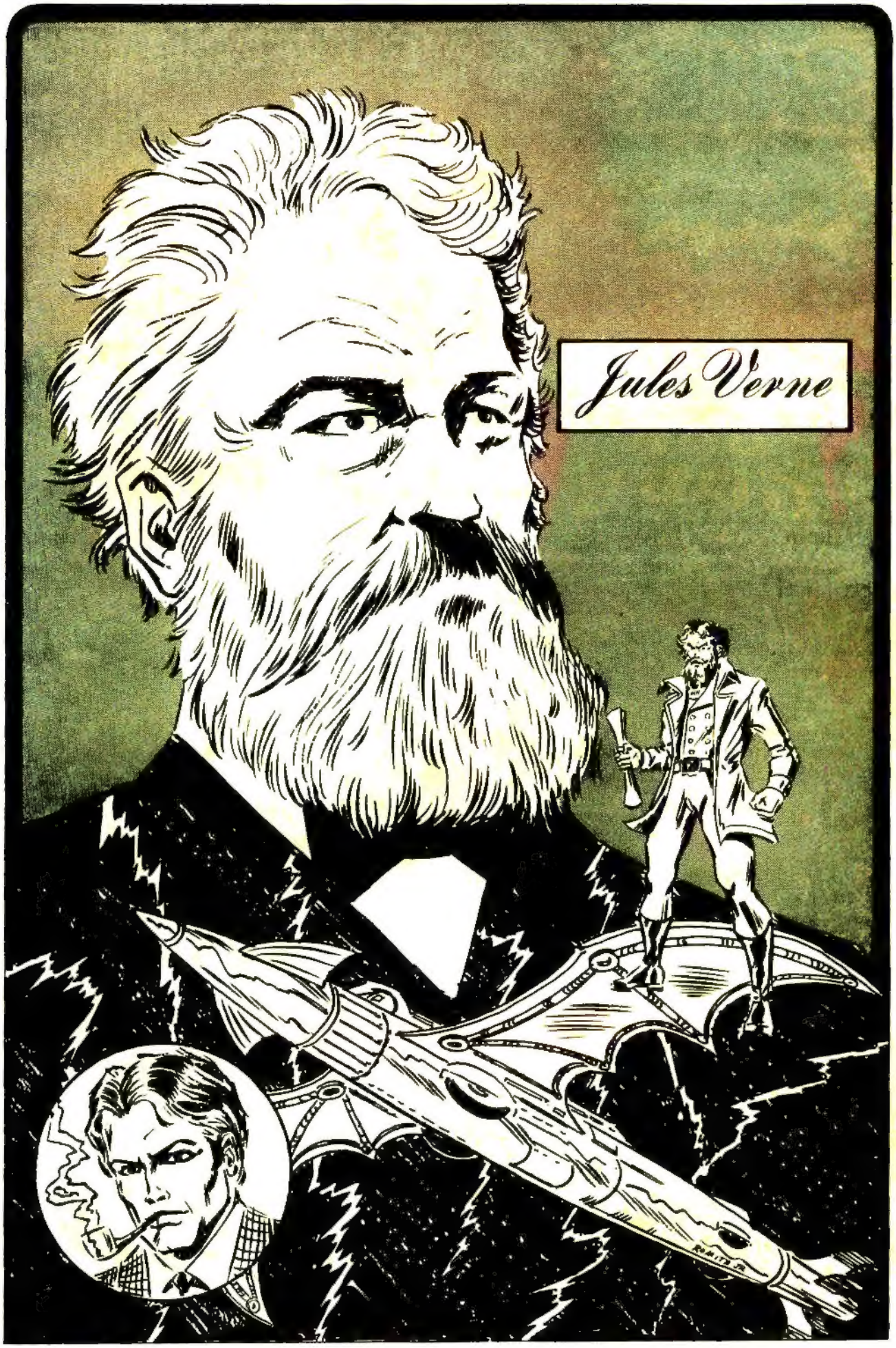

SHE SPLIT, SPREAD OUT ON ALL SIDES, AND LEAPED ONE FINAL TIME, BLASTED TO PIECES.
BRAMMM...!

I WAS UNCONSCIOUS FOR SEVERAL HOURS. WHEN I REVIVED, I WAS SURROUNDED BY THOSE WHO HAD SAVED MY LIFE...
YOU'RE ON THE STEAMER OTTAWA, YOUNG MAN, AND LUCKY TO KNOW IT. WHILE FLEEING THE STORM, WE ENCOUNTERED SOME WRECKAGE.
YOU WERE TANGLED AMONG THE DEBRIS CLINGING FOR YOUR LIFE.


SO THE MASTER OF THE WORLD HAD DISAPPEARED FOREVER, STRUCK DOWN BY THE FORCES HE HAD DARED TO BRAVE IN THE REGIONS OF THEIR FULLEST POWER.
ROBUR AND HIS TWO COMPANIONS HAD ENDED THEIR CAREERS IN THE WATERS OF THE GULF, WHICH WAS NOW THEIR GRAVE...

AFTER THE OTTAWA HAD REACHED HER PORT I RETURNED HOME TO CONVALESCE... AND WHEN I TOLD MY SERVANT THE STORY...
NOW, SIR, WAS I WRONG IN SAYING THE GREAT EYRIE WAS THE HOME OF THE DEVIL?
NONSENSE, ROBUR WASN'T THE DEVIL. HE WAS MERELY A MAN OF HIGHLY ADVANCED SCIENCE -- A GENIUS -- WHO WAS DRIVEN TO HUBRIS AND MADNESS BY THE TASTE OF POWER.
BUT HE WAS CERTAINLY NOT THE DEVIL...


AH WELL, PERHAPS NOT SIR... BUT HE WAS WORTHY OF BEING SO.
AND TO THAT, I CAN OFFER NO ARGUMENT.
END


Jules Verne

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